

*Tho. A. Iredell* 1357. i. 28  
THE

# SERMONS AND CHARGES

OF THE RIGHT REVEREND

JOHN THOMAS, LL.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER, AND DEAN OF  
WESTMINSTER.

PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS.

BY G. A. THOMAS, A. M.  
HIS LORDSHIP'S CHAPLAIN AND EXECUTOR, AND  
RECTOR OF WOOLWICH, KENT.

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VOL. II.

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TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

4

S K E T C H

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE AUTHOR,  
BY THE EDITOR.

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### THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD; IL- LUSTRATED BY THE CHANGES AND RE- NOVATIONS OF VEGETABLE BODIES.

I COR. XV. 35, 36.

*But some man will say, how are the dead raised up ; and with what body do they come ? — Thou fool ; that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.*

THAT in all our pursuits of knowledge, there is a certain point where useful enquiry ends, and a vain curiosity begins, is an observation, which, though true in general, seems to be more strictly applicable to the pursuit of *religious*, than of *natural*, knowledge. In a field so spacious as the material frame of the world opens to us, an inquisi-

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tive mind may be allowed an unbounded range. Curiosity, instead of being blameable, may there prove, as it often hath proved, the source of many useful and important discoveries : and the more we are induced to contemplate the *visible* works of nature, the more shall we be led to acknowledge and adore their all-wise and *invisible* author.

But with regard to the *will* of God, and the manner wherein his infinite *power* ; and *wisdom* shall conduct his dispensations towards his rational creatures, the bounds of human knowledge are so precisely marked out in the revelation he has been pleased to make of himself in the scriptures, that to aim at stretching our inquiries beyond them, is not only a vain, but criminal, curiosity ; it is an attempt to search into the hidden things of God—to be *wise above what is written*—and presumptuously to measure the perfections of the Creator, by the weak imperfect faculties of the creature.

And yet by this short and scanty line have sceptical inquirers in all ages presumed to measure the sublime truths of the christian

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revelation, and particularly that of our Saviour's rising again from the dead, as the *first fruits* of a general resurrection. Hence those petulant questions, *How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?* as if the only way to confirm our belief was to gratify our curiosity. So far, however, it was happy for religion, that this presumptuous curiosity began to exercise itself upon so important an article of our faith in the very infancy of Christianity; at a time when its most able guardians still remained alive; who, beside being eye-witnesses of the fact, were *endowed with power from on high*, to establish and defend it. St. Paul, it is true, had not the advantages, which the other Apostles enjoyed, of conversing personally with our Saviour, both before his death, and after his resurrection. But those advantages were amply made up to him by many *special revelations*: and, if not by a larger share of *supernatural endowments*, certainly by much higher attainments in *human knowledge*.

Indeed, the extensive province to which he was appointed, (for he was declared to be a *chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ among*

*the Gentiles\**,) called for a full and constant exertion of all his abilities. And how effectually he did exert them appears, not only from the success wherewith he every where *preached up Jesus and the resurrection*, but from the admirable manner in which he explained the great principles of christianity in his divine writings.—Writings that infidelity itself would admire, if they did not abound with the clearest confutation of it. For such was the reach of *his* abilities, such the diversities of gifts he was endowed with, that he could alike adapt himself to the learned and to the ignorant, to the candid and to the captious inquirer; sometimes equalling, if not surpassing, the sublimest heights of Grecian eloquence, at other times, descending to a plainness and simplicity of stile, which is the fittest vehicle of truth; but without neglecting that acuteness and solidity of reasoning, which the disputers of this world will in vain endeavour to refute. We might indeed collect sufficient proofs of the many eminent abilities he was possessed of, both as a writer, and an apostle, from this single chapter of his to the Corinthians—the subject whereof is so interesting,

\* Acts ix. 15.

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the sentiments so noble, the diction so clear, the metaphors so well chosen, the argument so conclusive, and the application of the whole so animated, affecting and persuasive, that from a candid perusal of this and his other discourses, a most judicious critic \* of the third century hath

\* Longinus.—The passage to which the bishop here alludes, is part of a fragment written on a manuscript of the gospels preserved in that famous repository of pious frauds, the Vatican, and by it ascribed to Longinus—Προς τοῖς Παῦλος ὁ Ταροεὺς, ὃν τινα καὶ πρῶτον φημι ἀροΐσαμενον δογματος αναποδεικτα.—On which the learned bishop Pearce has this note:

“ Hoc Longini de Rhetoribus testimonium ecstat in præstantissimo codice Evangeliorum Bibliothecæ Vaticanae Urbinatis, signato Num. II. quod mihi communicavit Laur. Alex. Zacagnius †, &c.”

The genuineness of this passage, however, has been much questioned, as appears from the following note:

“ Quæ de Paulo dicuntur, ea Fabricius bibl. gr. l. iv. c. xxxi. p. 445. a Christiano adjecta censet, cui Rhundenius adscititur. Ac profecto, si δογματα αναποδεικτα significat placita, quæ, quoniam evidentissima sunt; nullâ demonstrandi subtilitate egent, non video, quomodo Paulus, δογματος αναποδεικτα auctor, potuerit in hoc oratorum catalogo poni. Est ergo prorsus alienum additamentum.”  
—p. 214. Long. Nathan. Mori Lips. 1769.

† P. 260, Edit. Londini, 1782.

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hath very justly inserted the name of our Apostle in his list of the most celebrated orators of Ancient Greece.—A testimony that may well be held up against the invidious remarks of some modern unbelievers.

But, instead of reviewing the whole evidence for our blessed Lord's resurrection, which St. Paul has comprised in a strong and beau-

Which opinion is rendered the more probable, from considering the many interpolations which have been detected even in the best manuscripts of the Vatican: for proofs of which I refer the critical reader to the Prolegomena of Walton, Grabe, and Mills, and particularly Le Long Biblioth. sac. cap. iii. sect. iv. & Wetstein Prolegomena Nov. Test. p. 24.

But, “*Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis* \*,” is the natural eloquence of the Cilician Orator, to be defended: For how can *his* eloquence be doubted, who, by the force of his reasoning and insinuating address, made *one* monarch tremble on his throne, and almost persuaded *another* to be a Christian, and was adored by the Lycceans under the character of Mercury? His own pathetic and sublime addresses to the greatest and most prejudiced men of his time, prove him to have possessed the faculty of eloquence in a degree certainly not inferior to the most celebrated orators of ancient Greece. In his extem-

\* Virg. Ennid. s. 521.

poraneous

beautiful chain of reasoning in the chapter before us; I shall confine myself to the single argument in the text, wherein he very properly illustrates this important article of our faith by a similar instance of the power and wisdom of God in the changes and renovations of vegetable bodies after ; which I shall conclude with pointing out some of the reli-

poraneous speeches and replies to Agrippa, Festus, and Felix, such dexterity of address, such sublimity of thought, such energy of language, and such weight of argument, are so naturally displayed, as to warrant the assertions of a great critic \*, whose opinion coincides also with that of our author, and critics of the soundest judgment and correctest taste.

“ To end this long digression, neither malice nor infidelity, neither cavilling nor criticism can touch the miracles, reasoning, or language of this noble champion and preacher of the gospel ; this great master of the Jewish, Christian, and secular learning. The great author stands all over armed and invulnerable, against all their darts and attacks. All the forward grammarians, philologers, commentators, &c. who reflect on his arguments and expressions, will find the same success as that mentioned in the poet — ”

— “ Fragili querens illidere dentum  
Offendet solido.”

Hor. Sat. I, Lib. ii. v. 77.

\* Blackwall.—See Sacred Classics defended and illustrated, by the late Rev. and learned A. Blackwall, A. M. Edit. 1731. Vol. II. p. 312, &c.

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gious and moral uses which this particular method of proof suggests to us. But first it may be necessary to premise, that after St. Paul's departure from Corinth, some false, but popular teachers, taking advantage of his absence, began to employ their utmost art and address to undermine the solid principles he had established, by directing their chief attacks against the doctrine of the resurrection. It does not appear, from any notice which the Apostle takes of the information he had received, whether this opposition sprung from the philosophers, whom we elsewhere find rejecting this doctrine out of pride; or from the Sadducees in that city who disbelieved it upon principle. Thus much is certain, that his preaching *Christ crucified* was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness\*, wise in their own conceits, and delighting in the opposition of science falsely so called, the philosopher might deem it an insult upon his understanding to be exhorted to believe what he could not comprehend; and would admit no evidence for the truth of this great event, which did not convey a distinct idea of the manner wherein it was accomplished. But the philosophy of those times, the brightest

\* 1 Cor. i. 23.

torch of self-enlightened reason, was not what it had been, the purity of the Socratic school being totally immersed in sensuality and voluptuousness; and the Sadducees themselves were little better than Epicureans judaized. It is no wonder that men of these principles should greedily catch at every shadow of an objection to invalidate a truth which they could not think of without terror: for they saw, that a future state of retribution was a necessary consequence of the resurrection. Accordingly, while one made it his business to pervert the minds of the faithful by asserting the *impossibility* of the fact, another attempted to perplex them with his sophistry upon the *manner* of it.

With this insidious view, we may suppose him to ask some of the christian converts, whence came this new doctrine of your's? and from what authority did your great teacher derive it?—Not from nature, for the course of nature contradicts it:—and it is not to be found among the opinions of the learned. If the Deity hath, at last, thought fit to reveal it, why am I left any longer in doubts about it, and the mind suffered to labour under difficulties,

ficulties, which my reason in vain endeavours to surmount?—Say, therefore; *how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?*—In this verse the Apostle fairly states the question, and that which follows contains his answer. *Thou fool, says he, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.* He very properly, and with a becoming indignation, sends this presumptuous inquirer to the visible works of God for a solution of this wonderful difficulty—to those very works, and that same course of nature, from whence he had collected his objection. Thou wailest to know (for so the former part of thy question intimates) by what secret power the dead are brought again to life: Go, then, and learn, from a very common instance of the power and wisdom of God in the vegetable world, in what manner this mysterious process is performed. Ask the honest, though unlettered peasant, and he will tell thee, as I do, that the seed which he soweth, whether it be of wheat, or of any other grain, is not quickened except it die. If he should not give thee satisfaction, examine the process with thine own eyes. Observe whether, after it is sown, and covered with earth, as in a grave,

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grave, it does not first corrupt and suffer a total dissolution of its substance: till by the unknown operation of those principles which the all-wise author of nature hath impressed upon it, the same seed, that for a time was dead, again springs up, and assumes a new life.

And, as to the latter part of thy question, which respects the qualities and properties of that body, wherewith the dead shall come:— Go and learn enough of this also, by attending to the same familiar instance, and viewing it in another state.—Is the body of the seed, when sown, any thing like that which it hath when grown up? is it not of a quite different, nay of a more beautiful form and texture? yet admirably fitted to answer the gracious ends intended by it: For God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him; and to every seed its own body.—Now if he hath thus displayed his power in the changes and revolutions that appear in the bare grain, why may he not also shew his wonders among the dead, and his righteousness in the grave where all things seem to be forgotten? Be not faithless then, but believe that so is the resurrection of the

*the dead*; that the providence of God will at least have the same care of *mankind*, as of the *seed* which is sown, and that to them also he will give such a body as it hath pleased him; and to every man his own body—*his own*, as to its essential and individual principle, however changed and refined from the corruptible qualities that before adhered to it. For though it be sown a natural or animal body; it will be raised a spiritual and incorruptible body,

In this manner hath the Apostle illustrated that fundamental article of our faith which throws a new light upon the dignity of human nature, and completes the whole scheme of the Christian Dispensation; and although his reasoning proceeds only upon the *resemblance* there is between the renovation of vegetable, and the resurrection of human bodies, yet the argument concludes as strongly for the power and wisdom of God in the one case, as in the other.—Besides, we can now appeal to demonstration itself for such wonderful appearances in the formation of natural bodies, as the inexperienced Corinthian would have been no less surprised at, than he was at the doctrine of the resurrection. For would  
be

he ever have believed, that the seed which we sow contains within its shell the root, the blade, the stalk, and all the constituent parts of its own species?—That the growth and maturity of the plant which rises from it, is only the gradual unfolding and enlargement of those parts, by the help of juices imbibed, and air communicated through its proper vessels? and yet all this is clearly discovered by the lights of experimental philosophy, and the instruments that have been invented to assist the *natural* powers of vision. But what hand, save that of the Almighty, could fold so much vegetable perfection in so small a compass? or what wisdom less than infinite, could impress upon the bare grain a law, that shall continue an ordinance for ever, not only to repair, but to multiply its kind? *some to thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold!* We see, then, in every view with what peculiar propriety the Apostle hath selected from all other productions that very *seed*, which is the chief support of our present life, to be the emblem of our rising again to a future and immortal state of being.

And

And now let us apply what has been said to the religious and moral uses which naturally result from it. And first, from considering the just indignation that St. Paul expressed at the Corinthian sceptic, let us learn to be modest and humble in our inquiries into *things that are too high for us*; and, as the prophet advises, since *God is in heaven and we upon earth*, to let our words be few \*. Had this caution been duly attended to, many learned and well-meaning men would have remained satisfied, as every reasonable man should be, with the incontestible evidence of the *fact*; and not have been unwarily drawn into so much unedifying altercation concerning the *modes* and properties of the bodies with which the dead shall be raised up. The *duties* of religion are plainly revealed to us, and are therefore the proper objects of our *practice*: but its *mysteries*, at least those parts of them that are not revealed, are the proper objects of our *faith*. Reason indeed may compare what is delivered to us in the *word*, with what we daily see in the *works* of God; for both proceed from the same infinitely wise

\* Eccles. v. 2.

Author

Author of truth and goodness: and though bounded as our prospect now is by our bodily imperfections, we can nevertheless discern many instances wherein they illustrate and explain each other: but in the perfect state which is to come, a full and comprehensive view of the analogy between the works of grace and nature, may possibly constitute some part of that inconceivable pleasure which God hath prepared for them who shall be counted worthy to obtain a better resurrection\*.

That we may not be found unworthy, or unprepared, let us further attend to the strict resemblance there is between the growth and decay of vegetable and human life. The happiest events of our present state are comprised by the sacred writers in the following short but elegant description. *Man, say they, flourisheth as a flower of the field* †. If to be thus compared to one of the most beautiful productions in nature, should flatter our pride; yet how soon will that pride be humbled, when we read and reflect upon the shortness of its duration; for though *in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it*

\* Heb. xi. 35.

† Psalm ciii. 15.

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*is cut down and withered\*. Nay, the wind only passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more †. Or should a man live till he is full of days; should he drop into the grave as ripe as the shocks of corn, and have even been satisfied with length of life; yet what proportion doth this period of time bear to eternity?—he only cometh up and is cut down. To this point the comparison will hold.—All beyond it is infinitely to our advantage. For though the natural man, like natural plants, be sown in weakness, and turned to destruction, yet he only shall be raised with power, and spiritualized to glory.*

Again, as we cannot but observe the progressive advances which the seed sown is daily making towards maturity, and the perfection of its nature; we should hence be led to exert our utmost endeavours, to come up to this part of the comparison also; by making a suitable progress in the improvement of our moral and intellectual nature. The very season of the year reminds us of this important branch of our duty, and will upbraid us with

\* Psalm xc. 6.

† Ibid. ciii. 16.

the

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the neglect of it; if, while every single seed after its kind is at work to answer the gracious ends of Providence; we, who have a nobler task assigned us, should be found the only slothful and unprofitable part of the creation.— It is not enough that men plow, and sow, and plant vineyards which may yield fruits of increase\*; and employ their art and ingenuity to variegate and enrich the colours of their flowers, to improve the juices of their plants, and to meliorate the flavour of their fruits.— It is not enough to cultivate and adorn the lot that is fallen to them in a fair ground with every thing that can delight the eye, or gratify the appetite. All this is only to labour for the meat that perisheth! whereas the good fruits by which we should be known, must be raised from the seeds of virtue and religion; cultivated and improved by a learned education; and thus raised, they will be immortal like ourselves, and gathered unto life eternal.

Upon the whole, as every part of the natural world furnisheth us with the most ample proofs of wisdom in the design, and of power

\* Psalm cxvii, 37. M.

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and goodness in the execution ; as the beauty that is spread over the face of the earth, and the bountiful provisions that are drawn from it, are alike maintained by a continual round of the production and dissolution of vegetable bodies ; and as the *seed which we sow is not quickened except it die* ; but, when quickened, is changed and springeth up into quite another form—we may therefore appeal both to the reason of the philosopher, and the experience of the peasant, whether the same divine power and wisdom, which are so clearly manifested in the changes that are necessary for the renovation of vegetable bodies, is not likewise able to produce such changes as are proper for the resurrection-body ?—The care of Providence will assuredly be proportioned to the excellence of the object : and our Saviour's argument may be applied to this case also—that if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven ; shall he not much more clothe \* us, and cause this mortal to put on immortality ?—In the mean time let us be careful to perform our part ; and to profit even from the example which nature sets us, by a progressive growth

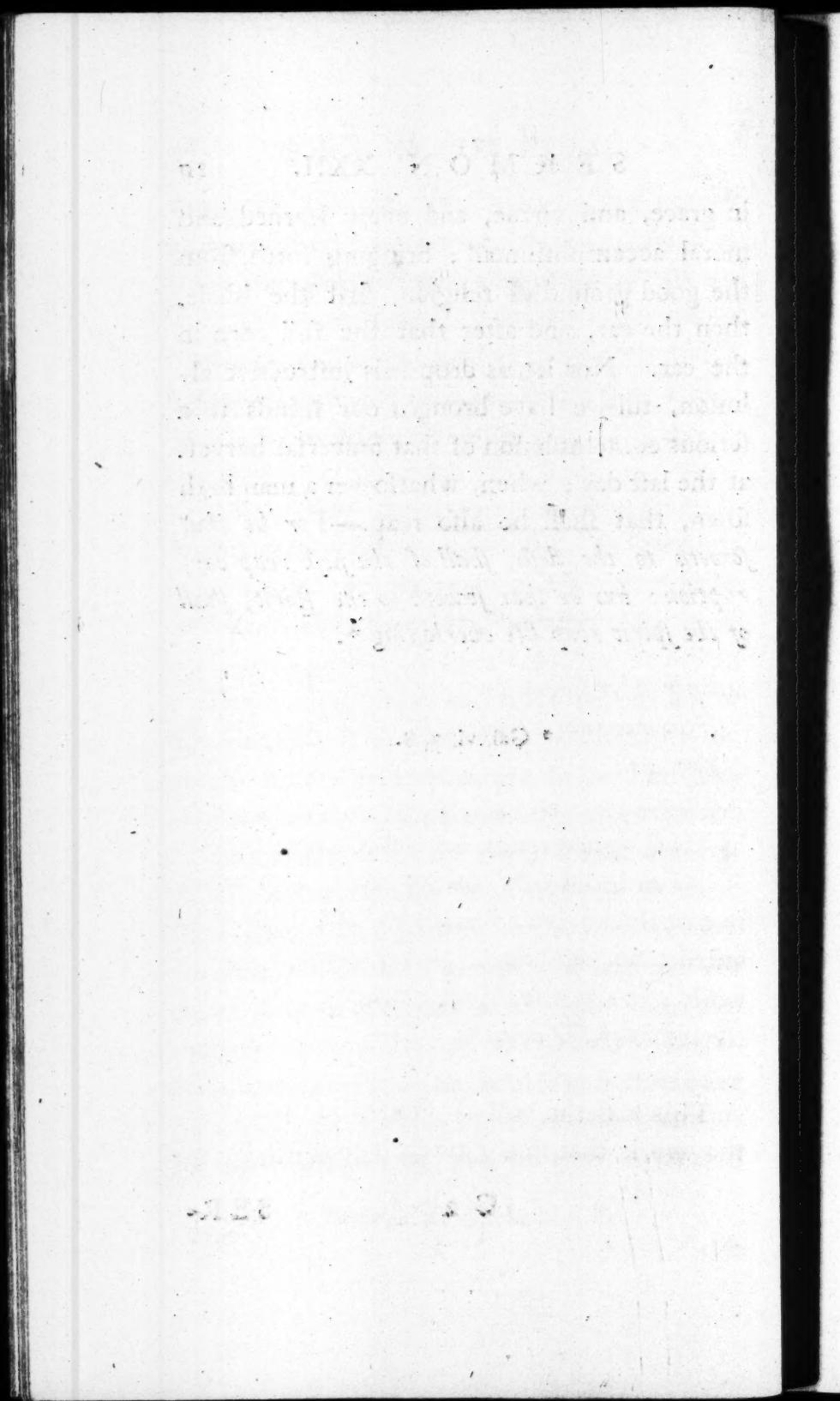
\* Matt. vi. 30. Luke xii. 28.

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in grace, and virtue, and every learned and moral accomplishment; bringing forth from the good ground of religion, first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. Nor let us drop this instructive allusion, till we have brought our minds to a serious contemplation of that universal harvest at the last day; when, whatsoever a man hath sown, that shall he also reap.—*For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting* \*.

\* Gal. vi. 7, 8.



## SERMON XXIII.

THE DUTY OF RESIGNATION, FROM THE  
EXAMPLE OF CHRIST; AND THE TRUE  
CAUSE OF HIS BITTER AGONY.

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MATT. XXVI. 39.

*O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass  
from me—nevertheless, not as I will, but as  
thou wilt.*

THE great ends for which our blessed Lord took our nature upon him were, to reveal and bear witness to the truth—to instruct an ignorant, and redeem a guilty world; or, as the Apostle declares, *to destroy the works of the devil* \*.

This was the will of God who sent him; the work that his Father, agreeably to the

\* 1 John iii. 8.

covenant of grace and mercy, gave him to finish: but no otherwise could he finish it, than by passing through the temptations and trials, the pains and sufferings, incident to our nature; and, at last, as the absolute condition of that covenant, submitting to a most cruel and ignominious death.

Many were the intimations he gave his disciples of what was thus to befall him; and the nearer this important event approached, the more expressly did he apprise them of it.

In his last journey to Jerusalem, which he plainly told them would be his last, he described the manner in which he was to suffer—the previous insults and indignities he was to bear, and the very persons that were to inflict them. *Behold, says he, we go up to Jerusalem: and the son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes, who shall condemn him to death\**; and, for that purpose, *deliver him to the Gentiles, or Roman government, whose soldiers shall mock him, and spit upon, and scourge him, and crucify him.* Even the precise time, when all

\* Matt. xx. 19.

this

## S E R M O N XXIII. 23

this should happen, was clearly pointed out to them. *After two days, said their blessed Lord, is the feast of the passover, when the Son of Man shall be betrayed to be crucified—that to-day and to-morrow, he should be permitted to exercise his divine power, in doing cures among the people, and on the third day he should be perfected.*

But how shall we reconcile so clear a foresight as Christ had of his approaching sufferings and death, if that was the bitter cup he was to drink of, with his earnest supplication to his Father, *that it might pass from him?* Was this consistent with the declared end of his coming into the world, to give his life a ransom for many \*?—Did he not therefore take our nature upon him, its frailties and sins only excepted, that in the body prepared for him, he might be capable of suffering for our sins?—and yet, after a short, laborious life, spent in *going about doing good*, and bearing evil; when there remained but a small space of time to put a period to all his sufferings as a man—but the passing a few distressful hours to re-instate him in all his glory

\* Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45.

*with God*—to suppose that the *captain of our salvation* would then shrink back from danger and death, from a dread of *that necessary end*, is to suppose him possessed of less fortitude than many ordinary men: certainly of less than was afterwards manifested by his own disciples, when *they* patiently suffered reproach and death for his name. But this cannot be! —Infinite in *mercy*, Christ had freely devoted himself to *be*, and, in his eternal purpose *was*, the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*\*. —Infinite also in *knowledge*, he distinctly beheld, before he came into the world, all that he was to suffer in it.

Should it not seem then, that it was not the bitter *cup* of death, which he so earnestly

\* Whatever commentators may talk of a transposition of the parts of this passage of scripture, the sense which the Bishop here, and in Sermon xvii. p. 271. gives of the context, is certainly the noblest, most natural, and most satisfactory. I know Grotius, Poole, Le Clerc, and Doddridge, interpret this passage by xvii. 8. of *Revelations*, but surely it would be illogical to make the effect precede the cause; which would be the case, if names could be inserted in the *book of life*, before the forfeiture of it was decreed to be reversed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

prayed

prayed might pass from him ; but that agonizing hour, when left to *himself*, and, for a time, unsupported by any *divine aid*, he had to contend with the *powers of darkness*, with the great deceiver of mankind, and the inveterate enemy to their salvation, which his meritorious obedience unto death was about to procure !

To shew that this conjecture is supported by the scripture, and rests on the original grounds of the Christian Dispensation, we need only advert to that early period in the sacred history, which informs us by whose malicious subtlety the blissful state of human nature was ruined, and likewise by whose merciful interposition it was to be restored.

The account indeed of this wonderful revolution in the moral world ; either from its being then a mystery which was to be gradually unfolded ; or, that the inspired writer was only admitted to a partial view of it, is wrapped up in allegory, and delivered in a figurative and prophetic style : but to us, who have happily *seen the salvation of God*, the whole is more clear and intelligible.

Thus,

## 26 SERMON XXIII.

Thus, when the Almighty Creator in pronouncing sentence, both upon the *deceiver* and the *deceived*, said to the serpent, *I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed—He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*\*.—What are we to understand by this declaratory sentence, but that the time should come, when a descendant of the woman, by bruising the serpent's head, would give an effectual blow to his power, and get himself the victory? And yet this victory was not to be obtained by the promised Messiah, without suffering some pain in the mighty conflict. He was to be *bruised for our iniquities, and wounded for our transgressions*†.

In the mean while, mankind had an active and insidious enemy to deal with; who, although he dared not contend with the Almighty Creator, was ready enough to encounter his frail imperfect creatures, and such he might presume would be that seed of the woman, who, in *the fulness of time*, was to *bruise his head*.

\* Gen. iii. 15.

† Isaiah liii. 5.

Watchful and attentive to this important period, he no sooner found that the *promised Messiah* was come, and about to erect the standard of truth against him, than he again resolved to try the effect of his subtilty; at the time when *Jesus*, after being *baptized*, was led by the spirit into the wilderness, to prepare himself by prayer and fasting, to accomplish the merciful ends of his mission.

There the tempter, transformed perhaps into an angel of light, found him absorbed in devout contemplation, the powers of nature exhausted, no visible aid to succour, no sustenance to support him. But in vain did the tempter urge him to give a proof of his divinity, and to satisfy the cravings of nature, by commanding the *stones to be made bread*.—In vain did he offer the meek and lowly *Jesus*, if he would do homage to his power, to raise him from his present forlorn and destitute condition, to wealth, and glory, and grandeur. Baffled and defeated in all his stratagems, and convinced that he had something more than **MAN** to deal with, the *Devil*, as St. Luke informs us, departed from him for a season.

And

And what fitter season could present itself than when the time drew near that Christ, according to the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God was, by wicked hands, to be apprehended, crucified and slain \*? And can it be supposed that so watchful, and indefatigable an enemy to man's salvation, would omit so favourable an opportunity of renewing his attack upon the divine Author of it? He changed indeed his plan, and now attempted to subdue him by force, whom he could not before corrupt by flattery—and he attempted it, at an hour when every thing seemingly conspired to favour his insidious purpose—the gloomy dusk of night—the deep recesses of the garden—the chosen disciples, that were to watch, overcome by sleep—the soul of their beloved Master exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: and, till an angel from heaven appeared to strengthen him, left to sustain this last and severest conflict by the sole efforts of his human virtue.

In these distressful circumstances, it is no wonder that Satan, and his wicked spirits, should once more endeavour to shake the

\* Acts ii. 23.

steady purpose of our Saviour; and, either by force or stratagem, to deter him from pursuing the appointed means of accomplishing man's redemption, and their confusion—one while shewing him the instruments of torture to be used at his crucifixion—at another throwing into the cup which his Father gave him to drink, the bitter ingredients of infamy, shame, and torment! Here disturbing his devotions with amazing horrors; and there struggling with him until *his sweat was as great drops of blood falling to the ground*—every thing, we may suppose, that would cause a deeper impression than the bare fear of an ignominious death; which, how terrible soever to many, could not be so to him, who knew it *was impossible he should be holden of it*\*,—so that had he not been beset with other terrors, wherefore did he so meekly surrender himself to the betrayer and his party; though he could have obtained *legions of angels* to oppose them, but because he well knew, as he told them, that *this was their hour, and the power of darkness?*

\* Acts ii. 24. I am deeply sensible,

Here

Here let us close this very affecting scene, and offer some considerations, that result from this part of our Saviour's history and example, to confirm us in a steady opposition to the temptations of our spiritual enemy; and a perfect resignation to whatever trials and afflictions, it may be the will of our heavenly Father to lay upon us.

It is from divine revelation alone, that we are made acquainted both with the *cause* of the corruption of human nature, and the *cure* of it. Thence also we learn the nature and disposition of those spiritual beings, by whose secret influence our *duty* and *happiness* may either be *advanced* or *obstructed*. We know not, indeed, in what *manner* good or evil spirits are impowered to act upon the human frame. Invisible, as they are to us, neither they, nor their operations, are objects of our senses: but this concludes not either against their existence or their agency. The air we breath is invisible: we cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: but we are sure of its existence; and, by attending to its effects upon the body, we judge whether it is  
*pure*

S E R M O N   XXIII.      31.

pure or *pernicious*; and govern ourselves accordingly.

And why are we not *equally* attentive to the baneful influence of evil spirits upon the mind? Is it because their suggestions are agreeable to the natural bent of our inclinations? because they lead us from the rugged paths of duty, to the smooth and spacious fields of sensual enjoyment? because they help to remove every obstacle to the gratification of our desires; teach us to confound all distinctions between right and wrong, and facilitate the attainment of whatever the heart lusteth after? These, alas! are some of the *evil fruits*, which, how fair soever to look upon, clearly indicate the *corrupt tree* that brings them forth, and the deceitful hand that offers them. But sad experience finds them of a quality fatal to human happiness; and religion tells us that, if we would have our *fruit unto holiness*, we must be directed to it by *the spirit of truth*. For *God is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able*. His grace, if we devoutly implore it, *will be sufficient for us.*

Nor

Nor will it be less sufficient under trials of a different nature : as the same religious principles that inspire us with fortitude to resist our spiritual enemy, will produce the humble duties of submission and resignation to whatsoever troubles and afflictions, it may be the *will of God* to lay upon us.

In this view, the example of our divine Master recommends itself to our imitation with great propriety. His cross is the distinguishing badge of our profession ; and if we refuse to take it up and follow him, we cannot be his disciples. But what an infinite disproportion is there between *his* sufferings, and the heaviest that were ever borne by the sons of men ! Upon him, *who did no sin*, were laid the *iniquities of us all*, whereas we are seldom made to suffer for the iniquities of *others* ; and, when for *our own*, even then, to a less degree than we deserve. And if *present punishment* be laid upon us to *prevent eternal sufferings*, by *leading us to repentance*, we are encouraged to hope, that such *light afflictions*, which are but for a *moment*, may *work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight*

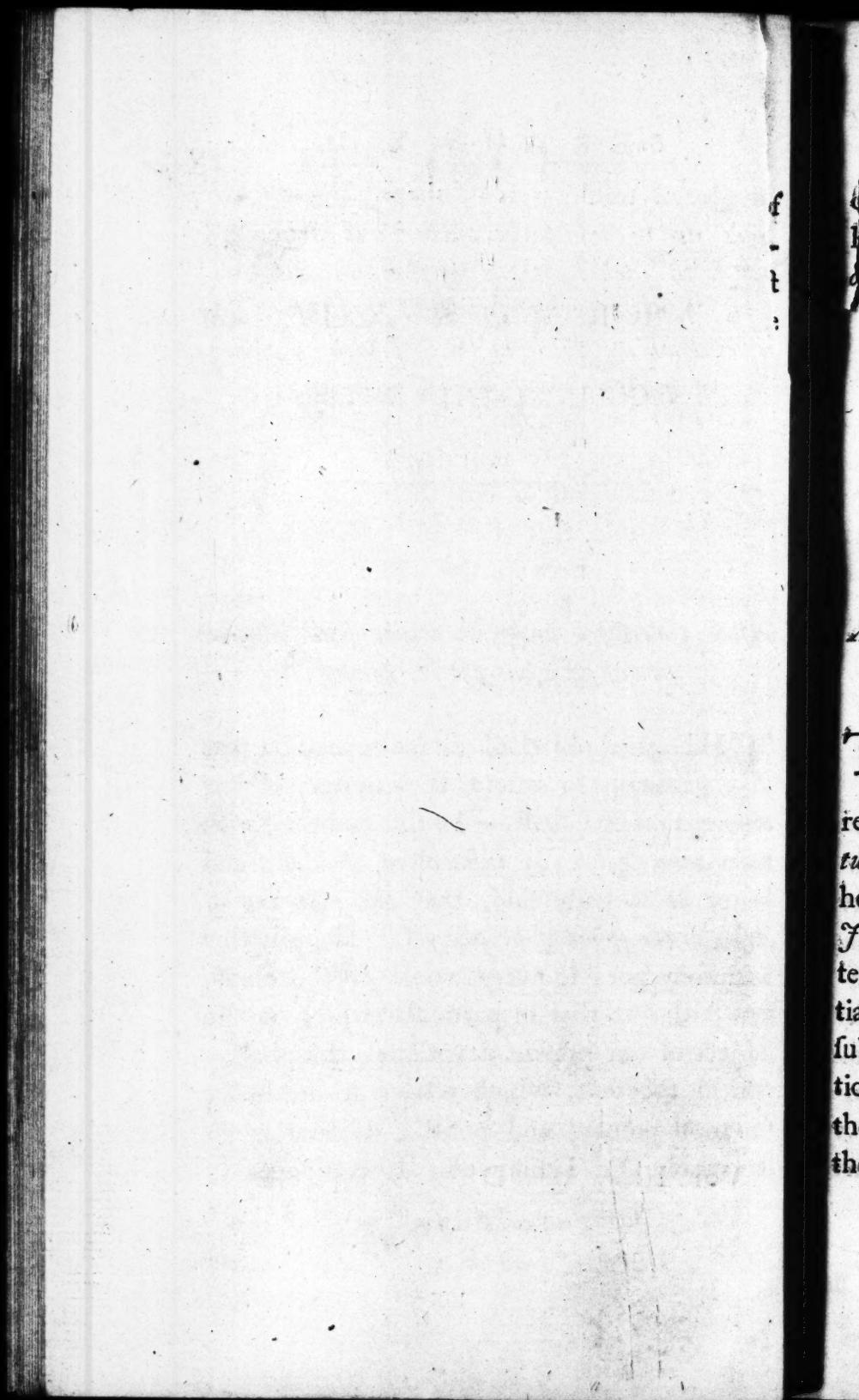
## SERMON XXIII.

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of glory; teaching us in the mean time, to look up to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God \*, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us †.

\* Heb. xii. 2.

† Ibid. vii. 25.



## SERMON XXIV.

DANIEL's SEVENTY WEEKS:

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DANIEL ix. 26.

*After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah  
be cut off; but not for himself.*

THE great object of divine revelation was gradually to unfold the mystery of our redemption by Christ.—To this end the scriptures were given by inspiration of God: and hence it is truly said, that *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*\*. Happily this testimony goes to every article of the christian faith—to that in particular which is the subject of our present devotions; the prediction in the text, which relates to it; being the most pointed and positive declaration in the whole Old Testament. It comprises in

\* Rev. xix. 10:

few words, not only a promise of the Messiah's coming, but prefixes the time, pronounces the fate, and declares the end and design of his coming, that at the expiration of a given number of years, he should *be cut off, but not for himself*—that is, he should be put to death; not for his own offences, for *he knew no sin*; but to expiate the sins of a wicked and corrupt world!

This prophecy therefore is so accurate and determinate, that it cannot possibly be misapplied. The obstinacy of Jews, the ingenuity of infidels, the malice of heathens, can neither pervert it, or explain away the force and conviction it carries with it. But although the prophecy is too plain to be denied, they can nevertheless take a shorter way to get rid of the difficulty, by denying the authenticity of the book that goes under the name of the prophet; and arguing, from the exact completion not only of this, but of many other predictions which it contains, that the book must have been written after their accomplishment; and yet, such is the inconsistency of wilful prejudice, these very adversaries are ready enough to shift their ground upon other occa-

occasions, and boldly contend, that many prophecies, which we christians maintain, are so dark and obscure, that the application of them has no better foundation than mere conjecture.

But as truth has ever had wisdom and virtue on its side—the best and ablest men for its defenders; so the great argument from prophecy in general, or this of Daniel in particular, has been no more hurt by the many invidious attacks upon it, than the prophet himself was by being *cast*, on a malicious accusation, into *the den of lions*,

It would nevertheless be an unpleasant circumstance, to meet with any objections to the authenticity of this book, and the veracity of the predictions recorded in it; if they had not been repelled and answered to the satisfaction of every candid mind, by the able defenders of our religion in almost every age and country, and especially in our own. And indeed there is in the book of Daniel a stamp and characteristic of its genuineness which is equal, if not superiour to any evidence that can be now produced. It is written in the

true spirit of prophecy; it foretels many important events in regard to the then future fates of kingdoms and empires, which in due time were punctually accomplished: and, what is most to our present purpose, our Saviour himself appeals to the very prophecy in the text, which is a most convincing proof, that it must have been in use among the Jews before his mission. *When, says he, ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, then let them that be in Judea flee unto the mountains* \*:—The passage referred to is that which immediately follows the text, and is part of the same verse; declaring, that, *after threescore and two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary*: thus predicting the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, almost in the same words in which our Saviour foretels and forewarns his disciples of that sad event.

Here then is a prophecy, the authenticity of which the most obstinate and incredulous cannot overturn. It was delivered in the

\* Matt. xxiv. 16.

most

most express and unequivocal terms by one prophet, who assigned a period of four hundred and ninety years for its completion: it is referred to, and confirmed by him who was *more than a prophet*, and whose sufferings were involved in it—the sufferings of *Messiah the prince*, the anointed of God, so clearly pointed out, and so exactly fulfilled, that it is in vain for infidelity to seek for any subterfuge, any subtlety to evade the force of this prediction. Some prophecies relative to the death and sufferings of Christ, from not so clearly pointing at his person, have been forced into a different application. Even that of *Isaiah*, expressed in the style of prophetic anticipation, that *he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken*,—though so clear that nothing but that blindness which hath happened to Israel, can apply it to any other person than our Redeemer, is not so determinate, in regard to the object, as the prediction of *Daniel* in the text, that *the Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself*. The mention of the very person, who at a time prefixed, viz. after the expiration of three-score and two weeks of years was to suffer,

## 40 SERMON XXIV.

and actually did suffer for the sins of the world, not for his own, leaves no possibility for evading the force of this prophecy ; nor is in any one sense capable of application but to the person of Christ. A mode of reasoning has indeed prevailed of late, that prophecies cannot be explained, before they are fulfilled ; but we know, that, from the calculation of the weeks in Daniel, both the Jews and Samaritans, about the time of our Saviour's appearance, did expect their promised Messiah.—*Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*\* was a question that naturally arose from his extraordinary powers and character.

If then the prophecy, we have been considering, be thus plain and well defined, what solid satisfaction ought it to give to the minds of all true believers ? and how readily ought we to acknowledge that the gift of prophecy in general, which at *sundry times and in divers manners*, the Almighty bestowed on his favoured servants, was one of the principal means whereby he was pleased to prepare the

\* Matt. xi. 3. Luke vii. 19.

## SERMON XXIV. 41

world for the reception of the Christian Dispensation?

Hence it is, that almost every page of the Old Testament presents us with figures, types, or prophecies, all converging to this one point. They form a chain of evidence, commencing from the fall of Adam, and extending through a space of near four thousand years, maintained by various corresponding authorities, and confirmed by their respective and extraordinary events. But yet, if this chain, strong as it is, were broken and disjointed; if all concurring evidence were scanty and deficient; if what is foretold by Moses and the prophets had *not* been foretold; we might nevertheless maintain that this single prophecy of Daniel, authenticated as it has been by every mode of critical investigation, would be sufficient to silence the most industrious opposers of our religion.

It remains therefore to consider, in few words, how this prophecy is completed in the person of our Saviour.

And

And first, it is very remarkable that the title of *Messiah*, or the anointed of God, as applicable to that person who was to die for the sins of mankind, is mentioned in none of the prophetic books, but that of Daniel. Other prophets speak in more general terms, or prefigure him in types and symbolic expressions, without fixing any particular time for his advent; but it appears from several passages in the New Testament, that, on this very prophecy of Daniel, the Jews grounded their expectation of the coming of this person under the name of the *Messiah*, which is there appropriated to him. It is in this sense that the apostle Andrew said to Peter, *We have found the Messiah: and that the Samaritan woman knew that the Messiah cometh.* —*Jesus saith unto her, I, who speak unto thee, am he.* \*

He, indeed, was—the sacrifice prefigured to Abraham—the scape goat who was to bear away the sins of the people: the great high Priest who entered once into the *Holy of Holies*, and who now sits at the right-hand of

\* John iv. 26.

God

## SERMON XXIV. 43

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God to make intercession for us. In assuming the character and office of Messiah, he submitted to all the indignities which he knew were to be offered to that glorious title—to the poverty of his condition, the *insincerity* of his friends, and the *malice* of his enemies—in short to *be cut off, but not for himself,* and to be numbered with the *transgressors*\*.

That this was the Messiah, or Christ, who died, and was put to an ignominious death, wants no proof from argument; the enemies of our faith very readily admit it; and that he died for our redemption from death eternal, is evident from every proof that man can imagine God to give.—If he was pleased, in times past, to *speak unto the world by the prophets*, he *bath also in these last days spoken unto us by his Son* †—by whom he made the world, and who therefore gave himself for it, *that he might redeem it from all iniquity*.

But, to effectuate this gracious purpose, it was expedient that he should come in the nature of man, *that he might taste of death for every man* ‡—might be touched with a feeling

\* Isaiah liii. 12.

† Heb. i. 1.

‡ Ibid. ii. 9.

of

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*of our infirmities, and be in all things tempted and tried as we are, but yet without sin*\*. And indeed his preparation for death, when he knew that the *hour was come*, wherein he had to contend with all the powers of darkness, seems to have been the most grievous of all his trials, to have produced the bitterest agonies of mind and body ; something more exquisitely painful than the severest sufferings of a mere mortal : and yet without murmuring or complaining, *he was led like a lamb to the slaughter* † ; and persevered, through mockery, contempt, and torture, to accomplish the end for which he came into the world. He might, as he said, *have prayed to his Father*, and received *more than twelve legions of angels* ‡ to oppose the impious band that came to seize him ; but how then would the scriptures have been fulfilled ? or, he might have come down from the cross and saved himself, as his enemies tauntingly bade him do, but how then would he have been *cut off*, and *suffered for our transgressions*? — No ! he knew how to save himself by more glorious means ; by shewing that *death had*

\* Heb. iv. 15.      † Isaiah liii. 7.      Jer. xi. 19.

‡ Matt. xxvi. 53.

## SERMON XXIV. 45

*o dominion over him ; and that nothing was  
so hard for his power, which did not defeat  
the designs of his mercy.*

And was ever mercy like unto his mercy ?  
He who emptied himself of the glory which  
*he had with the Father from the beginning ;*  
*and for us men and for our salvation came down*  
*from heaven \* to humble himself to death,*  
*even the death of the cross ! Where shall we*  
*look for an example of such unbounded love*  
*and mercy of man to man ? For, as the Apo-*  
*stle observes, scarcely for a righteous man will*  
*any die ; but God commendeth his love towards*  
*us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ*  
*died for us †.*

What tribute then of praise and adoration  
ought we not to pay for this transcendant love  
of our Saviour and Redeemer ! But what doth  
he require of us, but that we should believe  
and obey from the heart that form of doctrine  
which he delivered to us ? If therefore we  
would be Christ's disciples, and rely on his  
merits, we must add to our faith virtue, and  
crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.

\* Nicene Creed.

† Rom. v. 8.

His

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His grace, if we sincerely implore it, is sufficient for us ; but we must not continue in sin, that grace may abound ; for he is not the Redeemer of those that continue in sin, but of those that repent. A tame and indolent assent to the truths of his religion will profit us nothing, except we follow the precepts and obey the commands enjoined by it ; and his commandments are not grievous. The ceremonies of the Jews, the pilgrimages of the Mahometans, the indulgencies of the Church of Rome, may stand in the place of meritorious virtue, to those who are persuaded to rely on them ; but our more pure religion knows of no substitute for virtue, no pardon for sin, but our own sincere repentance, together with faith in the merits, and obedience to the precepts of our merciful Redeemer.

Now to him that is of power to establish you, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and, by the scriptures of the prophets, is revealed to all nations for the obedience of faith—To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ; for ever \*. Amen.

\* Rom. xvi. 25, 26, 27. partim.

## S E R M O N XXV.

## THE CHRISTIAN VICTORY.

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I COR. XV. 57.

*But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory,  
through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

R-  
**A**S the doctrine of Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling block, so the resurrection of Christ was to the Greeks foolishness. To remove the prejudices of the former, to satisfy the scruples of the latter, and to confirm both parties in the faith, was the great object of all the apostles: and thence arose their labours, their sufferings, their glory. But in spreading abroad the knowledge, and establishing the principles, of the Christian Dispensation, none of the apostles engaged with a more ardent zeal, nor was there any whose

whose labours were crowned with more success than those of the great apostle Paul.

And yet, such was the humble opinion he entertained of himself, that, although in points of human learning he was confessedly superior to the rest of his fellow labourers, he nevertheless disclaimed all merit on that account; and in this very chapter, which for solid reasoning, and persuasive eloquence, may vie with the most celebrated compositions of antiquity, he modestly speaks of himself, as the *least of all the Apostles*—labouring, indeed, *more abundantly than they all*: but acknowledging it was not he himself, not his own powers and abilities, but the *grace*, or favourable influence of God, that gave success to his labours.

Indeed the extensive province to which he was divinely appointed, called for a constant exertion of both his acquired and supernatural abilities: for he had not only to instruct the ignorance, to reform the manners, and to expose the idolatry of the heathen world; but, what from the advantage of his education he

was

## S E R M O N XXV. 49

was also very capable of, to encounter and refute the vanity of their philosophy. Hence the spirit and address wherewith he singly engaged the leaders of the Stoic and Epicurean schools at Athens: and hence their vain conceits on his opposing the revealed doctrines of Jesus and the resurrection, to the gross superstition and idolatry that disgraced their philosophy. But the most copious and convincing argument in defence of the resurrection, is what he afterwards drew up for the immediate use of the Church at Corinth; for there also *the disputers of this world*, envious of his success, and availing themselves of his absence, very artfully began their attack on this main article of the christian faith, before the new converts were well prepared to defend it. And it was to confute these gain-sayers, as well as to confirm the believers, that St. Paul, through this whole chapter, proceeds from proof to proof, and from reason to reason, with such an accumulated weight of evidence, that the more attentively it is considered, the more firmly will it establish the principles, and exalt the hopes, of every honest, unprejudiced mind.

I am truly sensible, that no observations I can offer on this celebrated argument, will place it in a stronger light than will naturally result from your own private meditations. Permit me, however, to point out and pursue the method in which the Apostle seems to have conducted it; in order to prepare our minds for joining with him in that proper expression of gratitude and thankfulness delivered to us in the text.

Here then the principal points to be considered, are plainly disposed in the following order. In the first place the Apostle gives us a brief state of the evidence for our *Saviour's resurrection*.—In the second, he thence deduces the certainty of *a general resurrection*; and then closes the whole in a kind of *triumphant exultation*, followed by a most affectionate and animated persuasive to a steady course of piety and virtue.

I. And first, As the ground work of all that was to follow, the Apostle introduces the proof of our Saviour's resurrection, by reminding the Corinthians of the reason for his death,

death. *I delivered to you, says he, when I first began to instruct you, that which I also received; how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures—that he was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures* \*.

Now, in resting this branch of his argument upon those predictions in the sacred writings, that relate to the death and resurrection of Christ, the Apostle wisely took the same ground that his divine Master himself had taken, when he reasoned with the two ignorant disciples in their way to Emmaus †. They, like the rest of the Jewish nation, had mistaken both the character and the office of the Messiah that was to come. It was from revelation alone they could learn any thing of his coming: and therefore our Lord, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded to them the things concerning himself, and thence shewed them that the great ends of the Christian Dispensation, which were to redeem and sanctify mankind, made it requisite that Christ should first suffer what

\* 1 Cor. xv. 3.

† Luke xxiv. 13.

the prophetic spirit had long foretold he *was* to suffer, and then *enter into his glory*.

But to fix the accomplishment of this event on the surest ground, the Apostle proceeds to confirm the several proofs that might be drawn from the authority of scripture, by the concurrent testimony of many living and credible witnesses. He tells the Corinthians, that Christ, after his resurrection, *was first seen of Cephas*; *then of the twelve*; *and again, of above five hundred brethren at once*: *of whom*, says he, *the greater part remain alive unto this present*\*.

Now if the evidence of a fact is to be established, either by the credibility or number of the witnesses, both these requisites concur to authenticate the present case. It was not Peter alone; not the united testimony of all the Apostles, but that of near five hundred witnesses, many of whom might still be produced in its support. So that if any doubt remained of what St. Paul, and the rest, had every where asserted, the scrupulous had abundant opportunities of inquiry: to all this he

\* 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6, 7.

subjoins

subjoins a still later evidence : and he offers it with that becoming modesty and humility which shewed him to be a sincere and honest convert : *Last of all, he was seen, says he, of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God* \*.

Having thus established the truth of our Saviour's resurrection upon the predictions of the prophets ; upon the evidence of a more than sufficient number of witnesses, and confirmed their testimony by his own ; which, from the extraordinary manner of his conversion, and the miracles he was empowered to work, gave it every possible degree of certainty ; he proceeds upon this sure foundation to build the doctrine of a general resurrection ; which is the second branch of his discourse.

II. This he enters upon by observing, that the resurrection of Christ is to that of good men in general, what the first fruits were to the whole harvest. Under the Mosaic œconomy, wherein almost every thing was typi-

\* 1 Cor. xv. 8, 9.

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cal of christianity, a portion of the corn, that was first ripe, was gathered and consecrated to God, with the joyful hopes, that through his goodness, all the rest would follow it in due time. Christ therefore being raised from the dead, is very properly styled *the first fruits of them that slept*,—and with a view to remind his converts of both the cause and completion of the Christian Dispensation, he immediately subjoins, that *since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead: for as in Adam all die; even so in Christ shall all be made alive* \*.

The Apostle, no doubt, while he remained at Corinth, had so clearly explained the necessary connexion between our Saviour's resurrection and that of all good men, as to satisfy every reasonable inquirer; but having heard that something had been idly thrown out against the possibility of any resurrection, he set himself to animadvert upon it in the following manner.

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead: if this be a fact that rests upon un-

\* 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

deniable

## SERMON XXV. 55

deniable evidence, all objections against the possibility of a resurrection are overturned at once; and the natural consequence is, that we shall all rise likewise. Whence then is it that some among you presume to assert, that there is no resurrection of the dead?—Is it because an event of this kind is contrary to the ordinary course of nature, and the common experience of mankind? But can you know what the course of nature is, before it hath taken place? Besides, you should consider, whether your assertion does not deny more than you intended. For, if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and, if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain; your faith also is vain, and ye are yet in your sins\*! whilst I, and the other Apostles, who, from the purest motives, and the strongest conviction, have every where preached the redemption of our bodies through the merits of Christ, from death eternal, must have acted the part of the vilest impostors; if so be, the dead rise not at all. But was ever any fraud contrived and carried on by such a number of associates and none detected, none discover it? and, what is more, was ever any

\* 1 Cor. xv. 14.

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fraud supported with such visible attestations of divine assistance as we are blessed with ? with miracles, and mighty signs and wonders, *which no man could do except God were with him* \* ?

Some men may, perhaps, have taken a pleasure in deceiving the world ; and for a time may have found an advantage in it ; but was it ever purchased at the rate we pay for it ? by afflictions, by necessities, by distresses, and standing in jeopardy every hour !—For my own part, adds the Apostle, *I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily !* so frequent are my sufferings ; so severe my persecutions, that I go every day in danger. But *why*, if I may so speak, *have I fought with beasts at Ephesus* ? wherefore do I patiently bear the contempt, the insults, the barbarities, of wicked and brutish men ; or what advantage will all this be to me, if the dead *rise* not to a state of happiness ? Nay, under these circumstances, were there nothing to be looked for beyond the grave ; we, who have hope in Christ, should be *of all men most miserable*. Better, in that case, to adopt the

\* John iii. 2.

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voluptuous principles of the Epicurean—to indulge an unbounded luxury, and to say with him, *let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die*\*, But be not deceived by such evil communications.

\* *Munonis, Epicureos, & ejus generis* alios ipsorum verbis depingens. Verba sunt deprompta ex Græco, Isa. xxii. 13.—says Poole, in his note on this passage.

Very much to the purpose is the story told by Livy, of the senators of Capua, who, having revolted from the Romans to Annibal, and despairing of mercy when the city was retaken, made a feast together, and poisoned themselves at the conclusion of the entertainment.

See Lowth on Isaiah, and Livy, lib. xxvi. cap. II.

Le Clerc's note on this passage is too curious not to be transcribed.

Sunt qui hinc, & ex citatione Arati, colligant Paulum Ethnicorum Poetarum scripta versasse. Verum hæc fuerunt veluti proverbia, quæ in omnium ore erant, poterantque facilissimè disci ex quotidiano sermone, etiam indoctorum hominum; quomodo Paulo innotuisse & memorie mandata fuisse credidirim. Non solebant enim Judæi Ethnicorum scripta lexitare, nec ceteroqui stylus Pauli ullam in nobis suspicionem movet vel salutatorum à Paulo eiusmodi studiorum. Nam si Ethnicorum scripta lexitassem, color aliquis ex eâ lectione ei haesisset. At hinc discere licet, non esse repudianda Christianis, quæ bene ab Ethnicis dicta sunt.

Clerici in Nov. Test. tom. ii. p. 197.  
Francofurti, 1714.

But

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munications. Learn therefore from my practice the sincerity of my persuasion ; and beware of the insidious arts of those, who mean to pervert your *principles* by flattering your *passions*, and to draw you off from the only sure ground whereon all hopes of immortal happiness *must* be built.

From this answer to one objection, which had nothing in it but the confidence of the assertion, we might proceed to observe what

But surely the aversion which was so common among the Jews to the profane authors of antiquity, cannot be admitted as any proof of a similar aversion in one miraculously converted from Judaism to Christianity, and appointed to instruct and convert the heathen nations. On the contrary, it is a fair inference from St. Paul's own declaration, that he "was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some;" that with so accommodating a temper as his, neither the heathen writings nor manners could be neglected, so far as they could be rendered subservient to his important mission, and as far as was consistent with a safe conscience and inflexible integrity.

It is rather singular, that not only the same opinions, but also the very same expressions, are adopted by Beza, Grotius, and Poole, on this passage of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians,

a pro-

a proper reply is given to another \*, which sprung from mere impertinence of curiosity—but that having been fully discussed on a former occasion, we may hasten to the last and most important object of our consideration—namely, what St. Paul hath here revealed of the general resurrection of the just, at the final consummation of all things.—Behold! says he, *I shew you a mystery! We shall not all sleep*, i. e. the last generation of men, which, at that awful period, may be living upon the earth, shall not die; but *shall all be changed in a moment; in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound; and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed.* *For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality.*—So when these corruptible bodies of ours shall, at the command of the Almighty, have put on incorruption; and this mortal frame shall have put on immortality: then *shall be brought to pass the saying that is written*—then shall that remarkable prophecy

\* See Sermon xxii. vol. 2. in which the question—*How are the dead raised up?* is amply considered and satisfactorily answered.

of Isaiah be accomplished—*death is swallowed up of victory* \*.

III. What a wonderful scene does the Apostle here open to us ! A scene which only a divine revelation could have enabled him to disclose ; and inspiration have taught him to describe. All his former reasoning is now changed into rapture—and, as if the resurrection of the just was already past, he triumphs over death and the grave, till then the invincible enemies of humanity, beholds with an eye of faith their universal empire fallen ! their deadly weapons perished ! their numberless captives redeemed ! themselves vanquished, despoiled, and utterly subdued !—when in the fulness of joy he thus cries out, *O death, where is now thy sting ! O grave, where is now thy victory !*—But, a quick transition of thought leading him back to the present infirmities of our nature, his own experience tells him, that *the sting of death is sin, and that the strength of sin is the law*—that original law of the supreme Creator, whereby death was declared to be the unavoidable penalty of transgression. When again

\* Isaiah xxv. 8. Hosea xiii. 14.

reflecting,

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reflecting, how by the *Mediator of a better covenant*, the rigor of that law is abated, and the power of death destroyed ; he closes the whole with the grateful acknowledgment in the text—*But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ !*

And now it remains only that we briefly consider, in what manner we may best express our thankfulness for the inestimable benefits which this victory *may* secure to us : since according as we use it, we *may* be saved, or we *may* be undone by it. The Captain of our salvation did not take our nature upon him ; did not suffer death, and rise triumphant from the grave, for the *obstinate unbeliever* ; for the *wilful and impenitent sinner*.—Even an implicit faith in Christ as our Redeemer, and a ready assent to the proofs of his resurrection, give no title to the privileges of *his* spiritual kingdom, without real goodness of heart, and a sincere obedience to the laws of truth and virtue. To rely on his merits, if no more was to be done, would be an easy method of securing our salvation : and it is to be feared, too many are content with it. Not so the sober-minded christian.—He will

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will shew forth his faith by his works, and give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; since it is only by a patient continuance in well doing, that he seeks for a glorious resurrection to life eternal. He knows that the crown of glory, the prize of our high calling in God through Christ Jesus, is laid up for him in heaven, but he knows also that it must be contended for on earth; and that in order to obtain it, he must manfully fight under Christ's banner against sin, the world and the flesh, and continue his faithful soldier and servant to his life's end \*.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, as Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification—so let us die unto sin and live unto righteousness; and as the Apostle very affectionately exhorts us at the close of all—let us be stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord—forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord †!

\* Office of Baptism.      † 1 Cor. xv. 58:

## S E R M O N XXVI.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST CONDU-  
CIVE TO THE PROPAGATION OF HIS  
RELIGION.

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JOHN xii. 32.

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will  
draw all men unto me.*

THE miraculous deliverance of the Israelites, by the hand of Moses, hath always been considered as a type of a more plenteous redemption by the ministration, and sufferings, and death of Christ. Many similar circumstances occur in the conduct of both dispensations: and the particular, to which our blessed Lord alludes in the text, not only confirms the resemblance between them, but directly points at the great event which is the subject of our present meditation. The comparison

parison indeed is stamped with his own authority: for he elsewhere declares, that *as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted up* \*.

There is however a material difference both in the cause, and effects, of these distinct appointments. The Israelites for murmuring against God, notwithstanding the marvellous things he had done for their deliverance, were many of them wounded, and destroyed by fiery serpents that were sent among them: till, at the intercession of Moses, all who came and looked up to the figure of a *brazzen serpent*, which he was commanded to erect upon a *pole*, were to be healed and live. But in a general view, not the Israelites only, but all mankind were *sinners and dead before God*; and therefore Christ was lifted up that *whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life* †. There the remedy was local and temporal; here it was universal and spiritual: that preserved only a few offenders from immediate death; this restored the forfeited gift of *immortality* to the whole world.—And yet in neither case were the benefits

\* John iii. 14.

† Ibid. iii. 36.

to be unconditional :—the offending Israelites were to look up to the symbol of health, with a full trust in the divine goodness; and a sinful world was to be restored to grace and favor, by a sincere obedience to the laws of God, and a stedfast faith in the merits of a crucified Saviour, and triumphant Redeemer. Such were the means that a merciful Creator was pleased to appoint for the attainment of these very different, but important ends ! Means which, to all appearance, had no tendency to effectuate their respective purposes ; for, abstractedly considered, what salutary virtue could there be in the erected figure of a serpent, to impart health and life to those who looked up to it ? or what grounds to suppose, that Jesus of Nazareth, after being lifted from the earth upon the cross, and suffering a most ignominious and painful death, should be so glorified, as to “draw all men unto him ?” Was it likely, that a person reduced to so disgraceful a situation, should ever prove the founder of a religion that was to spread itself over the face of the whole earth ? and yet this is plainly intimated in the words before us. How then shall we account for it ? For that Christ was thus lifted

up, or crucified, is a fact which the enemies of our faith have always admitted with much malignant satisfaction ; but, that *this* manner of Christ's death should at all contribute to the propagation of his religion ; (for this too is implied in the text) deserves a more particular consideration. To this point then let our present view be confined ; wherein, if it shall appear, that one branch of evidence for the truth of christianity depended on a circumstance, of all others, the most likely to discredit and obstruct it ; the conclusion will be, that it was so ordered by the wisdom, and will finally be accomplished by the providence, of God.

I would not, however, be understood to mean, that mankind should at any time be induced to embrace the religion of Christ, merely from the certainty of his crucifixion. To determine the mind to such a step, there must, no doubt, be a concurrence of evidence resulting from the various parts of the whole dispensation—from the supernatural manner of Christ's conception—from the innocence and holiness of his life—from the purity and sublimity of his doctrines.—from the wonder-

## S E R M O N   X X V I .      67

ful display and usefulness of his miracles—and, especially, from the applicable descriptions of numberless prophecies; of which he himself was not more the *subject*, than the *author*: Nevertheless, all *these* powers and perfections are rather to be considered as credentials of his divine authority to instruct an ignorant world, than expressive of the means whereby he was to redeem a guilty world. The prophets indeed had described the Messiah under both these characters: and, what unhappily misled the Jewish interpreters, he was likewise described under seemingly opposite characters—as a *man of sorrows*, and a *prince of peace*—as *cut off* from the earth, and yet as *prolonging his days*: as *numbered with transgressors*, and yet as *justifying many*;—but still his suffering was to precede his triumphant state; and the main link, in the chain of prophecy, being fastened to the cross, gave strength, consistency, and brightness to the whole. From this last and most eminent act of obedience to the will of God, for which a body was prepared him, all the covenanted benefits of his passion were derived; all the work his Father gave him to do upon earth was declared to be finished; and he was

F a . . . thence.

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thenceforth to receive a kingdom, which, though *not of this world*, is to endure till all kingdoms fall down before him, and all nations shall do him service \*.

The manner of Christ's death, thus harmonizing with the scripture of the prophets, and his own repeated predictions, would naturally lead every attentive mind to consider what manner of man He was, who had suffered these things.—He who had spoken *as never man spake*, and wrought *such miracles as no man could do*, except God were with him. Besides, they saw that no sooner had he been lifted up from the earth, and given his life a ransom for many, than nature itself gave a most astonishing testimony to the truth of his divine mission; which, if it did not extort the same devout acknowledgment from his infatuated enemies, as from the less prejudiced centurion, must, in the moments of cool reflection, have produced sentiments very different from such as had been infused by the artful management of the chief priests and rulers. Could any one think it was for nothing that the *earth trembled and shook?* that

• *Second:*

\* *Mal. b. xiii. 11.*

*the*

## S E R M O N XXVI. 69

the rocks were rent? that the heavens were unnaturally darkened at noon day? and that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom\*? Of the many strangers whom devotion or curiosity had drawn to the great feast of the passover, some, at least, may be supposed to carry home deep impressions of these awful appearances: or, supposing, that on nature's return to its wonted course, these impressions were worn out and effaced—yet what must they have thought, when they heard from undoubted testimony, that, notwithstanding the utmost precautions of human policy, in securing the sepulchre, and posting a guard; this same despised, rejected, and crucified Jesus, had risen again from the dead, and appeared unto many?—What must they have thought, when, not many days after, at the feast of Pentecost, they found the disciples endowed with such power from on high, as instantly enabled them to speak and converse with men of every nation under heaven †, in their own language?—What must they have thought, when they heard that very Apostle, who so lately had trembled at the charge of being one of Christ's

† Matt. xxvii. 51.

† Acts ii. 5.

disciples, now boldly accusing the people of Jerusalem with having killed the prince of life, whom God had raised and loosed from the pains of death, because it was not possible he should be holden of it \* ? — What, I say, could they think and feel upon all this, but what the Evangelist says they did feel ? — Struck with the truth of prophetic applications, they were pricked in their hearts ; they repented and were baptized in the name of that very Jesus whom they had crucified ; and, the first occasion of verifying his prediction in the text was an immediate conversion of three thousand souls.

\* But, admitting the expediency of Christ's taking our nature upon him, to instruct us by his doctrine, to redeem us by his death, and to renew us by his resurrection, as the appointed means of reconciling the world unto God, yet where, it may be asked, was the necessity of his being exposed to such a painful, public, and ignominious death ? or why might he not have accomplished the gracious designs of Providence, by dying the common death of all men ?

If these were questions of petulant curiosity, they would deserve no answer: if of modest and humble enquiry, it may be observed, that, beside the affections of love, esteem, and gratitude, which our Saviour's thus dying for us must naturally excite in every generous breast; beside the animating example it presented to those whom he had prepared to expect the same cruel treatment; this particular manner of dying, not only harmonized with the scriptures of the prophets; but had a stronger tendency than any other, to establish the truth of his resurrection: for, as the proof of *that* depended on the notoriety of his death, so had he died, or been made away with in a private manner, which was often in vain attempted; it might have been difficult to convince the world of the precise time and place of his death; and, consequently, that the story of his resurrection was either a fiction or delusion. It might have been urged too, that some distempers are known to cause a total cessation of the animal functions; and that his disciples had availed themselves of some such accident to carry his body to the grave; and, after applying the proper means of recovery, to re-

port and maintain that he was *risen* from the dead. But could any thing of this kind be suspected of a person arraigned and executed in a public manner? amidst the vast concourse of a public festival? where the inflamed rage and malice of the multitude left no room for even a shadow of suspicion? and indeed the very mode of execution to which our blessed Lord foretold the Jews would subject him, by *delivering him up to the Gentiles*, was equally adapted to prove the reality of his death, and the certainty of his resurrection: for what stronger evidence could be offered for the identity of his person, after breaking the chains of death, than the indeleble marks of the wounds that put an end to his life?—This evidence we know was called for; and we know too the entire conviction it produced.

Thus did the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, the two fundamental articles of our faith, mutually illustrate and confirm each other; till both receiving a miraculous attestation by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles; they who were not sufficient of themselves to do any thing as of themselves,

selves, became thenceforth the powerful instruments of turning many to righteousness, by diffusing the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he had sent, through the vast extent of the Roman empire; and confirming what their divine Master had foretold, that after being *lifted up from the earth*, he would draw all men unto him.

And what but a sensible experience of the help which cometh from above, could have induced a few poor, illiterate, friendless men, to assume at once the rank and office of instructors and reformers of the whole world? Was the *preaching Christ crucified* a likely method to gain the favourable attention of mankind? Was it of force sufficient to break down the wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile? to abolish the consecrated rites of the one, and the pompous pageantry of the other? to silence the ambiguous oracles of pretended deities? to overthrow the long established altars of idolatry? the gaudy shrines, the magnificent temples of Pagan worship? and on their ruins to erect a pure, spiritual, and universal religion; which had no gratifications, no emoluments,—none of the good things

things of this life to offer: nothing but a patient submission to its severest sufferings, supported by the *sure and steadfast hope* of a joyful resurrection to life eternal?—And yet we know, and glory in the knowledge, that christianity *did* make its way to the reason and conscience of mankind through every difficulty; and that, in the few years which the malice of the world permitted those holy men to live in it, there was scarce a city, or province, through the vast extent of the Roman empire, but in some measure confirmed what their divine Master foretold, that, *after being lifted up from the earth, he would draw all men unto him.*

The time, indeed, when this remarkable prediction, which is to unfold and elucidate all the rest, will have its full and final accomplishment, is in no part of scripture fixed to a determined period; but reserved among the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God: nor is it for us to know the times and seasons which he hath put in his own power\*, who perceiveth the end from the beginning, and dieth to another. **Act. viii. 7.** And on another and

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*and in whose sight a thousand years are as one day \*.*

But, although our limited capacities cannot take in the whole aggregate view of things, we may, notwithstanding, conclude both from the divine veracity, and our own experience, that christianity, since its first promulgation, generally *hath* been, *is*, and *will* be, in a progressive state: ever advancing, though by slow and almost imperceptible motions to that fulness of knowledge, which shall overspread the earth, as the waters cover the sea. Various are the means that the providence of God may employ to accomplish this gracious purpose. He may occasionally infuse larger portions of his spirit into good men,—may open the understanding of the ignorant—may remove the prejudices of the interested—may stir up an active zeal in the indolent, and even turn the ambition, the avarice, and restless curiosity of *one* part of the world, to prepare a way for the religious instruction and happiness of the *other*.—Who, that looks back to no very remote period of time, but must see with devout astonishment, many immense

\* 2 Peter iii. 8.

tracts of country, that were long over-run by a vagrant and savage race of men, now settled, civilized, and adorned with the arts of polished life; and the sun of righteousness illuminating those regions that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, and shining more and more unto a perfect day? And can we tell what further discoveries the enterprising spirit of the present and future ages may attempt? or how the seeds of true religion may spring from them?—Whatever may be the human motives for prosecuting such designs; whether the avidity of extending dominion, of opening fresh sources of commerce, and multiplying the luxuries of life; they may all become finally subservient to the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and the propagation of his gospel. It is a prophetic truth, that many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased\*.

And now, upon the whole, if, in this season of pious recollection, we consider the duration, and extent, of the christian religion; for how many ages it hath already subsisted, and into what distant parts of the world it

\* Dan. xii. 4

hath

hath been conveyed; by what unlikely instruments it was propagated; to what severe persecutions its first professors were exposed; with what able and powerful adversaries they had to contend; and yet, that it should surmount all the difficulties thrown in its way by the passions, the prejudices, the interests, and vices of its opposers; and, after all, be established in every kingdom and country where the dignity and happiness of human nature is consulted—may we not, from the consideration even of these particulars, conclude as Gamaliel did of old, that unless *this counsel, and this work had been of God*, it must long since have come to nought.

But, after all, if christianity should from some persons meet with the same injurious treatment in its advanced state, as in its infancy; if the doctrine of the cross be still accounted a *stumbling-block* to one set of men, and *foolishness* to another; if those vainly attempt to evaporate the solid principles of our faith, by many an idle process of metaphysic subtlety; and then take counsel together how, with the pointed implements of wit and ridicule, they may *crucify the Son of God afresh,*

and

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*and put him to an open shame\*; yet let these scoffers, by whom the way of truth is evil spoken of, know assuredly, that a time will come, (and may they be duly prepared for it,) when even they shall look on him whom they have pierced; and, when every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father †.*

\* Heb. vi. 6.

† Phil. ii. 11.

SER-

## SERMON XXVII.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST A PROPER  
SUBJECT OF CHRISTIAN EXULTATION.

ACTS ii. 26, 27.

*Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue  
was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in  
hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in  
hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to  
see corruption.*

THIS portion of scripture is quoted by St.

Peter from the xvith psalm, as being expressive of the joy that filled the mind of the royal prophet, on its being revealed to him, that the Messiah, who was to be of the house and lineage of David, should triumph over death and the grave; and, after lead captivity captive. Hitherto, indeed, and especially from the day of the crucifixion of our Lord

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Lord and Saviour, to that of his resurrection, the enemies of the christian name triumphed over it, and the faith of the disciples themselves, was weak and wavering. They had seen the humble Jesus betrayed by one of his disciples, denied by another, and forsaken by all, they had seen him wrongfully accused by false witnesses, unjustly condemned by his judges, tamely delivered over to his enemies, cruelly insulted by the populace, ignominiously expiring upon the cross,—and he, who was expected to have delivered Israel from the bondage of the Romans, or rather from the bondage of sin, buried in a sepulchre, and our salvation, to all appearance, buried with him.

But now, my brethren, we are assembled, not like Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to pour forth our tears at his tomb, or to embalm his sacred body which could feel no corruption, but to express a religious joy and gratitude, for the infinite benefits derived to us by his sufferings, and confirmed by his resurrection; sincerely acknowledging with the royal Prophet, that *our* hearts also are glad, and *our* glory rejoiceth, that God will not leave *our*

our souls in hell, nor suffer us to see corruption.

That we may, therefore, worthily celebrate this solemn anniversary of our Lord's resurrection, it shall be the object of the following discourse;

Ist, To assist you in recollecting some of the many proofs that may be alledged for the truth of this happy event: and,

2dly, To shew the great matter of joy with which it furnishes us; which will naturally suggest the proper inferences that result from the whole.

I. And first, That Christ was crucified, that he died, and was buried, are facts that never were contradicted. So far are the Jews, and other unbelievers, from calling them in question, that they urge them as the shame and reproach of our religion. That the sepulchre also was found empty the third day after Christ's death, is a truth equally uncontested. For, as the Jews had the care of guarding his tomb, and had a party of Roman sol-

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diers granted them for that very purpose, they had only to produce the dead body of our Lord, in order to confute the report of his resurrection.

For either Christ did rise again to life, or his body was stolen—and if so, who were the authors of the theft? not his enemies, for by so doing, they would have confirmed what they wanted to disprove: and his disciples it could not be: for how can we suppose, that those who but lately had abandoned him to the mercy of his betrayers; and all, except St. Peter, *forsook him and fled*; and who himself trembled at the voice of a maid, and even thrice denied that he so much as knew him—how durst men of this timid character, even think of insulting the authority of the governor, of forcing the guard, and making head against troops in arms ready to oppose them? Is it natural to think, that a party of soldiers stationed there on purpose to prevent any such attempt, should suffer themselves to be defeated by a small number of men, void both of courage and conduct? The Jews, therefore, when *they gave large money to the soldiers, to say, that his disciples stole*

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*stole him away while they slept,* would have done well to have foreseen, and provided a solution to this difficulty—"the guard either slept or they did not; if they did *not* sleep, why did they suffer the disciples to take the body away? and if they *did* sleep, how could they *see* the body taken away, and charge it upon his disciples?"

But these presumptive proofs receive still greater strength from considering the several circumstances of the apostles' testimony of this great event. For whether we examine into the character of these witnesses, the uniformity of their evidence, the time of their giving it, or the motives that encouraged them to give it; we shall find that each of these particulars gives their doctrine a certainty beyond all contradiction.

And first of all, had the Apostles been men of high rank in the world, we might have conceived it possible for them to have propagated their imposture by their power and authority; or, had they been men of eloquence, and masters of the art of persuasion, they might perhaps have captivated, and ensnared

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the minds of men by the enticing words of their wisdom ; but when we find their own accounts, as well as others, describe them as people of no condition, without authority to oblige, or fortunes to bribe their followers, as a set of harmless, undesigning, illiterate men ; little acquainted with the refinements of learning, and consequently little able to impose upon the understandings and minds of others—we can hardly conceive how people of this rank and character, should succeed in deluding mankind. Besides, the uniformity of their evidence is no small proof of the truth of it. They unanimously asserted, *that Christ was risen*, and though of different tempers, inclinations, and interests, and all of them naturally too timorous to advance, as well as too artless to contrive, a falsehood of so high a nature ; yet we never find them vary in any the least circumstance of their depositions, or the one accuse the other of knavery and imposture ; a practice common enough where truth and honesty do not support the confederacy.

And indeed we may naturally suppose, and we accordingly find, that the novelty of this doctrine

doctrine sufficiently alarmed the rulers of Israel, those inveterate enemies of our faith, to make them use all possible diligence in detecting any falsehood. Jews and Gentiles, Philosophers and Rabbies, and that innumerable concourse of people of all nations, assembled at that time in Jerusalem, would all of them, no doubt, be inquisitive enough about the minutest circumstance of so surprising an event: an event which Providence seems designedly so to have timed, that nothing might render the Apostle's testimony so much as suspected. For not only the principal part of the Jews of the whole world, to whom this revelation was first to be made, were then assembled in the holy city, to keep the annual feast of the passover; but Jerusalem was yet to subsist forty years before its destruction, to the end that most of the Jews, then in being, might have time to examine into the truth of this new doctrine, and the completion of those wonderful predictions that were to establish it. And whence comes it, then, that, if those who were to undergo the strictest examination, were so simple and artless; and those who were to examine, so expert and capable of reducing them to absurdities;

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dities; whence comes it, I say, if this had been a plot contrived and carried on by the disciples, that no one should be able to discover their pretended fraud, or make them prevaricate in the least circumstance of their relation? So far from it, convinced of the uprightness and integrity of their hearts, and undaunted at the open violence, or secret practices of their adversaries, the apostles *spake baldly in their very synagogues*; setting up the standard of the cross, and erecting trophies to the memory of their crucified Master, in the very place where *but some days before*, his murderers had prepared the infamous instrument of his punishment. And this furnishes another argument for the veracity of their evidence, since if the disciples had not published this fact, till many years after it had happened, infidelity might have found its account in such a delay; but to deprive their adversaries of this handle, we find them in three days time, (or, however, as soon as they had received the Holy Ghost) preaching Christ risen, openly in Jerusalem, ere its rage and fury were appeased, and whilst *Calvary* was yet stained with the sacred blood of their *Redeemer*. And is it to be imagined, that im-

postors

postors would have pitched upon such a time as this to publish their designs? Would they not rather have waited till the rage and resentment of the Jews was composed, and till their attention became more indifferent to their proceedings?

I shall only insist on one presumptive proof more, and that drawn from the *motives* which induced the apostles to publish this doctrine. A very little knowledge of the world will serve to convince us, that all the various cheats and knaveries practised in it have generally the great principle of interest, and advantage for their motive. Their views indeed are different, being sometimes views of pride, sometimes of pleasure, and sometimes of profit; yet still it is some such interested view, that influences all their actions. But in the point before us, we must change the very nature of things, and reverse every passion and inclination of the heart of man. We must suppose, that, whilst other men sometimes sacrifice their eternal interest to their temporal welfare, the apostles must not only sacrifice all temporal advantages, but hazard their salvation too. The cruel treatment they

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actually met with in this world, and the just vengeance that would most certainly, had they been guilty, have pursued them in the next, render such a supposition highly reasonable. True it is, that during the life of Christ, they did flatter themselves with the hopes of some worldly honours and advantages ; but as these hopes died along with him, and they saw themselves exposed to the most cruel treatment, for endeavouring to propagate the doctrine of his resurrection, why did they not then redeem their lives by the confession of their imposture ? The greater the guilt of any conspiracy is, the more dispirited generally are the criminals when they come to suffer ; whereas these holy martyrs held fast their integrity to the latest moments of their lives, and signed the truths which they attested, with the last drops of their blood.

Such then are the presumptive arguments with which the testimony of the apostles furnish us, for the truth of Christ's resurrection, as of themselves will be thought sufficient to convince every candid mind of the truth of that great event, without calling in the aid of positive and demonstrative proofs : and

## S E R M O N XXVII. 89

and yet the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the miracles with which the apostles were enabled to seal the truth of their testimony, afford us this also. Let us, then, represent to ourselves these and other chosen witnesses of his resurrection, thus addressing their adversaries upon the effusion of the holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

“ You will not believe the doctrine now preached unto you, but take us to be five hundred persons of such a deluded imagination, as to be persuaded, that we have conversed with the Messiah, whom we have not conversed with, and seen him ascend into heaven, when we did not see him. Or, perhaps, you suspect us to be wicked impostors, or wild enthusiasts, that will suffer imprisonment and all kinds of torments, to have the pleasure of deluding mankind, and persuading them of a pretended resurrection.

“ —But, unless ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe; bring hither then your sick; present to us those possessed with devils, and produce your dead before us—Confront us with Parthians, Medes and Elamites. Let Cappadocia, Pontus, and Mesopotamia, Egypt, Phrygia, and Pam-

“ phylia,

“ phylia,—let all the nations of the earth send  
“ us some of their inhabitants, and they shall  
“ see us give *ears to the deaf, eyes to the blind,*  
“ *and feet to the lame.* We will heal the pos-  
“ sessed with devils, restore your dead to life,  
“ and we, poor, ignorant, illiterate fishermen,  
“ will at once converse with all the various  
“ nations of the universe in their native lan-  
“ guage. We will explain the prophets, and  
“ lay open the deepest mysteries; we will  
“ give you the most exalted notions of the  
“ Deity, the best precepts for the conduct  
“ of life, and a more noble plan of morality  
“ and religion than ever your rabbies, philo-  
“ sophers, or Moses himself, taught you.  
“ Nay, we will do more, we will make you  
“ partakers of all these gifts, and ye also *shall*  
“ *speak with strange tongues,* and acknowledge  
“ that all this is *the wonderful work of God,*  
“ *for it is he who hath shed forth this which ye*  
“ *now see and bear.*”

Here, then, is a truth attested with all the circumstances that can contribute to the confirmation of it, and a supernatural power conferred upon the publishers to work miracles in its favour; and these, not such as they of  
the

## SERMON XXVII. 98

the Roman church impose upon their weak and credulous brethren by their impious frauds, and secret contrivances; but such as were wrought openly and publicly, in the most populous cities, and before the most numerous assemblies—as were wrought not to fill the coffers of a private set of men, or to enrich the shrines of superstition and idolatry; but for the help and benefit of their distressed fellow-creatures, and the glory and honour of Almighty God. When miracles have these characteristics, we may safely pronounce them to come from God; and when they are thus wrought in favour of any doctrine, we may be assured it is of God; *and therefore we cannot overthrow it, lest haply we be found to fight even against God\**. But it is time to consider the pious use we are to make of this doctrine, and the abundant matter of joy which it suggests to us.

II. It has been already observed, that the mournful days, which passed between the death and resurrection of our blessed Saviour, were days of triumph for his enemies. Infidelity then triumphed over faith, and mocked

\* Acts v. 39.

such

such as sacrificed their inclinations to their duty.—See, there, said they, when Christ was taken down from the cross, that body pale and motionless; *the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more reward.* All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the clean and the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not.—But Christ is risen, and the just triumph in their turn. Their hearts are glad and their glory rejoiceth; their flesh also rests in hope, that God will not leave their souls in hell, nor suffer his holy ones to see corruption. Again,

During those mournful days, death triumphed over our hopes. The fate of all those who believe in Jesus Christ was involved in his. As he had said to his disciples, because *I live ye shall live also;* so we, upon the same principle, when Christ was in the sepulchre, might have said, because he is dead, we are dead also, never to rise again. And indeed how could we hope for another life, if he, who was to be *the resurrection and the life,* could not free himself from the chains of death? But Christ is risen, and therefore our  
hearts

## SERMON XXVII. 93

hearts are glad, and our glory rejoiceth. Nature is again repaired. The guilt of our first parents is expiated: death has lost his sting, and the grave its victory. What then, though our bodies be wasted with sickness, or bend under the weight of old age and infirmities; though death tear from our embraces those to whom our souls are most closely united, who have been our companions in solitude, our counsellors in difficulties, and our support in misfortunes—yet is our correspondence but interrupted, not broken off for ever: *for if the spirit which raised up Jesus Christ from the dead dwell in us, God shall also raise up our mortal bodies by his spirit which dwelleth in us.* Upon this confidence it is, that our hearts are glad, and our glory rejoiceth. Wherefore let our acknowledgments be equal to the benefits we have received. Let us celebrate the great Author of our salvation, with a voice of joy and thanksgiving at his holy table, and let a double portion of heavenly fire embrace this our sacrifice of praise, crying out with hearts truly sensible of this our inestimable happiness, *blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten*

gotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us \*.

Upon the whole, the belief of the resurrection ought to be the strongest motive to virtue and piety. The great work of our redemption is now finished. The Son has given himself a ransom for our sins, and the Father accepted it. But then we must remember, that the eternal Son of God (the second person in the glorious Trinity) did not descend to take our nature upon him, to suffer death upon the cross for our sins, and to rise again for our justification, only to render us more secure and confident in our sins. He who saw no corruption in his dead body, will not endure that we should cherish any corruption in our immortal souls ; nor will it profit us that Christ rose from a temporal death, except we also rise from a spiritual ; and have all our sins blotted out by repentance.

Lastly, Christ's resurrection affords us also the best consolation against the fear of death,

\* 1 Peter i. 4.

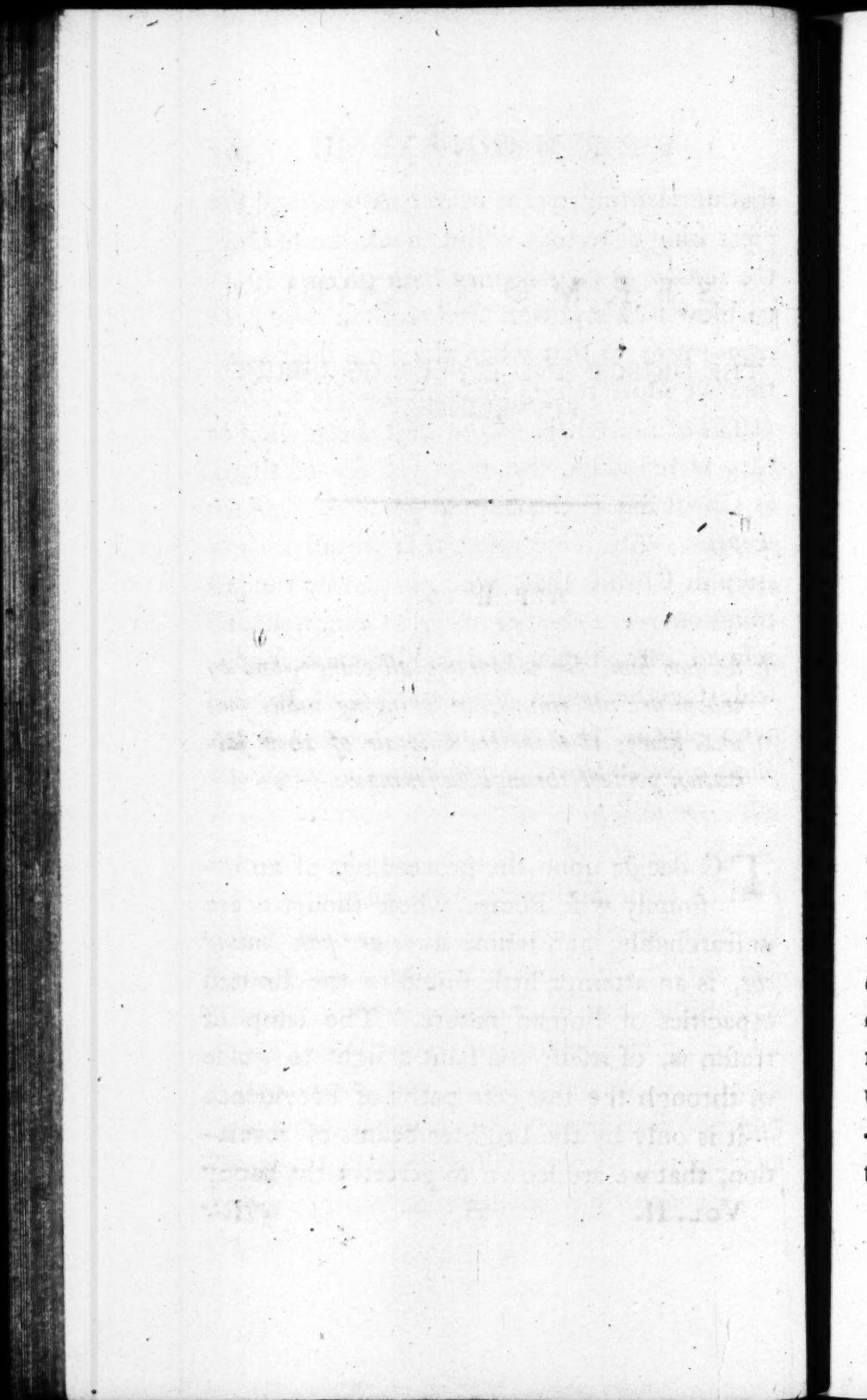
that

## S E R M O N XXVII. 95

that unrelenting tyrant of our nature, and the great king of terrors. But thanks be to God, the *captain of our salvation* hath given a mortal blow to his power, *and made us more than conquerors*; so that when the time shall come that we must resign these frail bodies, these vessels of mortality, to the dust from whence they were taken, we may yet say of them, as Christ did of the damsel, *she is not dead but sleepeth*. And God grant that we all may so sleep in Christ, that, when roused by the last summons, our bodies may be renewed and refined into higher and nobler perfections; and, together with the soul, return to God who gave it, to inhabit those heavenly mansions *whither Christ is gone before to prepare a place for us*; *that where he is, there we may be also* \*.

\* John xiv. 3.

S E R.



## SERMON XXVIII.

THE OBJECT AND EFFECT OF CHRIST'S  
SUFFERINGS.

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HEB. ii. 10.

*It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

To decide upon the proceedings of an infinitely wise Being, whose thoughts are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out, is an attempt little suited to the limited capacities of human nature. The lamp of reason is, of itself, too faint a light to guide us through the intricate paths of Providence —it is only by the brighter beams of revelation, that we are led on to perceive the happy

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*effects* of the divine dispensations, though we cannot perfectly discover the *cause*.

Thus, with respect to the very interesting subject of our redemption, were we to trace out the whole plan of it, from the first entrance of sin into the world, and of death by sin, through each progressive step that revelation discovers to us, there would still remain *many secret things that belong only unto God*: but we need not enter upon so large a field: it will be sufficient to confine our present view to that masterly sketch of it, which the Apostle hath drawn in the words of the text:—*For, it became him, says he, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*: i. e. “it was agreeable to the wisdom “and goodness of God, for whose glory all “things are, and by whose power and wis-“dom all things exist, in order that many of “the children of men whom he is pleased “to call *his* sons, might recover their title “to a glorious immortality, not only to make “his only begotten Son become a man, but “the captain also of their salvation, to lead “them

## S E R M O N XXVIII. 99

“ them on, by his own example, through  
“ sufferings to glory.”

The Apostle draws this conclusion from a previous view of the imperfection of the *Mosaic*, compared with the superior advantages procured by the *Christian Dispensation*. Both were conducted by leaders of divine appointment, and both were to bring *many sons unto glory*: but the one, in dignity and pre-eminence, as far surpassed the other, as an eternal doth a temporal inheritance—an *heavenly* doth an *earthly* Canaan. Hence the captain of our salvation is, in the preceding verses, described as one who was to accomplish all the mighty acts that God, *at sundry times, and in divers manners*, had *spoken of him by the propbets*, as one infinitely superior to the highest order of created beings, and consequently to the angels themselves, for he was the eternal Son of God; the *brightness of his Father's glory*; the *express image of his person*; the *appointed heir of all things*, and who upholdeth the whole system of creation *by the word of his power* \*.

\* Heb. i. 1, 3.

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And yet, what we cannot contemplate without alternate sensations of amazement, gratitude and love—this only begotten Son of God, this brightness of his Father's glory; this express image of his person; he who was so far *above angels, principalities and powers*, condescended to become, for some time, *lower than the angels*; and, agreeably to the covenant of grace and mercy, to be made man; that, by living for our instruction, and dying for our justification, he might, by his resurrection, prove himself to be the Son of God, and make us partakers in his glory!

But how shall we reconcile this mysterious part of the Dispensation to human reason, or the severity of the condition to divine justice! We know indeed that the works and wisdom of the Captain of our salvation bore witness to his divinity; and his sufferings and death are unquestionable proofs of his humanity: but, that the salvation of a guilty world should necessarily depend on those sufferings, is the principal difficulty with which the text is encumbered: for, if it became him, for whose glory all things were created; if it was fit and right to enjoin such a condition, it must certainly

## S E R M O N XXVIII. 101

certainly be so, upon a clear and just view of the gracious ends that were to be attained by it.

Here, then, we are venturing upon holy ground; where, if human reason will step with caution, it may collect sufficient evidence from the works and word of God, the noblest subjects whereon it can be exercised, to satisfy every candid mind, that the method of perfecting man's *redemption* by the *sufferings*, the *death*, and *resurrection* of Christ, was founded in the *wisdom*, consistent with the *justice*, and declarative of the *mercy* of God.

As his infinite mind pervadeth all things, so both past and future events to him are present, and being the first *cause* of all things, he at once perceives the final *issue* of all things; and, however his appointments may seem in the sight of less intelligent natures, to deviate from their right course, yet are they constantly advancing to fulfil his eternal purpose; of promoting his own glory, by the happiness of his creatures; and, out of *incidental* evil, to produce *actual* and *final* good.

How these principles apply to the case of redemption, will appear from attending to the light that revelation has thrown upon this important subject.

This instructs us, that among the many divine perfections which the sacred writings ascribe to Christ the Son of God, is the power of creation \* ; which, of all others, may well be supposed to have interested him in the happiness of his creatures. As *by him all things were made*; and without him was not any thing made that was made †, so every thing must have been designed to answer its proper end and purpose; inasmuch as infinite power, directed by infinite wisdom, would make nothing improper, or imperfect in its kind. Hence it follows, that man was made perfect, a free and reasonable being—designed for happiness, and endued with faculties fitted for the pursuit and enjoyment of constant and perpetual good: but on a declared condition, which the very act of creation gave a right to enjoin, and which, if he, and his posterity had continued to observe, their nature would

\* Col. i. 16. John i. 3. + John i. 3. Col. i. 16.

have

have been incorruptible, their happiness unchangeable.

But, when man presumptuously broke this condition—when, through the freedom of his will, that glorious privilege of his nature, (but absolutely necessary for the trial of his virtue,) he was not satisfied with the liberty of doing every thing that was *right*, without hazarding the forbidden experiment of doing what was *wrong*; when he thus dared to be guilty, he ceased to be *happy*.—Corruption seized upon a body tainted by sin, and death blocked up the gate to immortality.

That the allwise Creator *foresaw* this unhappy effect of human liberty, is not a sufficient reason why he should either have withheld the gift, or prevented the abuse of it. By such a proceeding, as man would not have been *free*, so neither could he have been *accountable*: not the object of *reward*, because he could have no *merit*: not liable to *punishment*, because he could incur no *guilt*.—But being created *free*, and with a consciousness of the rectitude or depravity of his actions, he became the *voluntary cause* of the punishment

ment he was doomed to suffer.—*The day that thou finnest, thou shall become mortal, and shalt surely die \*—and thus death hath passed upon all men, because all have sinned †.*

But were this to have been the final period of human existence, might we not ask in the plaintive strains of the Psalmist, *hath God then forgotten to be gracious, and hath he shut up his loving kindness in displeasure? is his mercy clean gone for ever? and will he be no more intreated ‡?*—Was it sufficient for his glory to have made us after his own image—to have given us a portion of his own celestial spirit (that pure source of all our intellectual and moral powers,) only to see us engaged in a perpetual and unequal conflict with the powers of darkness—with a subtle adversary, ever lying in wait to surprise us at some unguarded moment, and no friendly aid to work our deliverance?—Happily it was not so! Even the first offender had no sooner fallen from happiness, and was doomed to pain, and labour, and death, than he had hopes given him, hopes which being founded on the *sure word of prophecy*, have descended

\* Gen. iii. 17.    † Rom. v. 12.    ‡ Ps. lxxvii. 7, 8.

to all his posterity, of a mighty deliverer who, in the fulness of time, should advance to their succour, and recover their title to glory and immortality.

And who was this mighty deliverer, but Christ the captain of our salvation? or who so fit to undertake the glorious task of redeeming mankind, as he who made them? who so willing to bear their infirmities, as he who knew whereof they were made?—Although their sins had separated between God and them, and death was decreed to be the irrevocable penalty of sin; nevertheless, as it was by the disobedience of one that many were made subject to death, it was consistent with the justice of God, that by the obedience of one many should be made righteous, and restored to life eternal.

But nothing except absolute obedience could atone for an offence done to infinite justice, which not the utmost endeavours, not the united sufferings of all the sons of Adam could amount to, nor have any merit compared with, the voluntary sufferings of an infinitely perfect Being; who had power to lay down

*down his life, and power to take it again*\*. It became expedient therefore, for the Redeemer to assume the *human nature* into the *divine*; that by placing himself in a state of trial and temptation, but yet without sin, and being *made perfect through sufferings*, he might be *the author of eternal salvation to all them that believe.*

Such is the method revealed to us in scripture, that *infinite goodness* was pleased to adopt to satisfy the demands of *infinite justice*; and, in this inconceivable manner, did the *Captain of our salvation* retrieve by his wisdom, what he did not think fit to prevent by his power.

We must nevertheless remember, that the christian state is still a state of trial and spiritual warfare, wherein we must put on the whole armour of God, must *watch* that we be not surprised; and *pray* that we be not vanquished. For in vain hath the *Captain of our salvation* delivered us from the chains of *eternal death*, if we endeavour not to rescue ourselves from the dominion of *sin*.—It was one reason, among others, why Christ was

\* John x. 18.

made perfect through sufferings, that the many sons he was to lead unto glory; being animated by the bright examples of fortitude, patience, and meekness, that he set before them, might surmount every obstacle the world could throw in their way, to the possession of that incorruptible inheritance which he purchased by his death, and assured by his resurrection. Hence those illustrious followers, whom neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor the sword, could separate from the love of Christ, or render them less than conquerors. Hence also that holy army of saints, martyrs, and confessors, who in the early ages of Christianity, were content to suffer the loss of all things, and even of life itself, that they might obtain a glorious resurrection to life eternal. And, if happier times have been reserved for us,—if we be free to make a public profession of our faith, and are exposed to no danger by the practice, but to infinite danger by the omission of it, *how shall we escape* (it is an apostle \* that asks the question) *if we neglect the means of so great salvation*\*? and therefore my brethren, let us now, and at all times,

\* Heb. ii. 3.

join with another \* Apostle in blessing God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us \*.

Permit me now to close what has been offered, briefly, on the subject of Christ's sufferings, with an observation or two on the wisdom of Providence in so ordering them.

And, first, if we consider in what a public and ignominious manner our blessed Lord was put to death, we shall find some particulars in it that had a natural tendency to strengthen the evidence of his resurrection. Of this he had given frequent intimations, both privately to his disciples, and openly to the Jewish rulers themselves. He had even referred them to it on their pressing him to give them a *sign* of his being the Messiah, after the many they *ought* to have taken as such. And, as they could not deny that many miracles had been wrought by him; they might

\* 1 Peter i. 3, 4.

well conclude, that he who had power to raise others from the dead, had likewise the power to raise *himself*.—They might indeed, and it appears they wanted not inclination, have put him to death, by other methods than a public trial and execution: but how then would the *scriptures* have been fulfilled that thus it must be \*? How would he have been led as a lamb to the slaughter †, and his innocence justified by the very judge from whom the sentence of his crucifixion was extorted? or how would he have been numbered with the transgressors, and made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death ‡?

Disappointed therefore, and baffled in every other attempt, the restless malice of this infatuated people led them to the very method which divine wisdom foresaw would prove the reality of his death and resurrection. And yet nothing could be more artfully contrived, either to bring his person and character into contempt, or to stamp those indelible marks upon his body, that must immediately detect any the most artful imposture on his part.—

\* Matt. xxvi. 54.      † Isaiah liii. 7. Jer. xi. 19.

‡ Isaiah liii. 9, 12.

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Little did the Jewish rulers imagine, that those marks would ever be shewn as incontestable proofs of his *actual* resurrection. In the mean time, they satiated their malice, but could not suppress their apprehensions: and, as guilt is often betrayed by its own inconsistency, so, they first applied for, and obtained, a party of soldiers to guard the sepulchre, where *the body of Christ lay*; and then bribed them, when they found he *was* risen, to say, they had *not* guarded it. But if they had posted there the whole force of the Roman empire, what is human power, opposed to omnipotence! for he *did* rise again at the time appointed; and the manner of his *death* was found so necessary to evince the reality of his *resurrection*, that nothing less than a close examination of the wounds he received at his crucifixion, could remove the doubts of one of his own disciples. *He saw and believed.*—Let us remember, that *blessed shall they be that have not seen, and yet have believed*\*. And hence we may further observe, that the crucifixion of our Lord offers one proof, among many, of the interposition of

divine

\* John xx. 29.

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divine power and wisdom in the propagation of his gospel.

If we consider the manner and circumstances of Christ's death as preparatory to a new, but perfect, mode of religion, we should be apt to conclude, that instead of promoting, it must unavoidably have obstructed, its progress. Never indeed was there any religious institution proposed to the world on grounds so unpromising in appearance; and yet so firmly established in it, only by the pure and genuine force of truth. If we look back to the Mosaic, the first *national* religion of *divine* appointment, we find it introduced and impressed upon the mind, by a most awful display of the glory and majesty of God himself. If from thence we pass to the idolatrous religions of ancient times, we hear them boasting of heroes and kings, the tyrants and conquerors of the world, both for the founders, and the objects, of their worship. Even that of the bold impostor MA-HOME<sup>T</sup> which for some secret purpose of Providence, is still permitted to prevail over a considerable part of the earth, opened a way to its establishment by the sword; and when it

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it shall have served that purpose, may perhaps verify the prediction, that *they who take the sword, shall perish with the sword*\*.

But how different from all these were the means of introducing the Christian religion! —Its author *despised, rejected, crucified!*—Its first publishers glorying in those circumstances, though on every side distressed, poor, unlearned, friendless †! No human power to protect

\* Matt. xxvi. 52.

† These truths are beautifully and forcibly described by a celebrated English poet in the following lines, which are very properly adopted for the motto to the Analysis of Archdeacon Paley's most seasonable and masterly *View of the Evidences of Christianity*.

“ Whence but from heaven, shou'd men unskilled  
“ in arts,

“ In different nations born, in different parts,

“ Weave such agreeing truths? or how? or why?

“ Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?

“ Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,

“ Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price.”

DRYDEN.

How natural is the reflection on this passage of the poet, that if he had thus consecrated his lyre to the service of truth, instead of prostituting it to the meanness

of

protect them, all the powers on earth combined to oppose them! And, as if God had been jealous of a divided glory; for some ages, *not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble were chosen to propagate the gospel*; but God chose the *foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak to confound the mighty*\*: that the amazing pro-

of hyperbolical adulation, and degrading the dignity of genius by a dissolute licentiousness of style, he might have soared:

“ Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,  
Nor yet beneath the good—“ but far above the great.”

GRAY, Ode v.

The passage above cited may serve to rescue the memory of a great poet from the charge of total infidelity, and to confirm the opinion of his learned biographer,— That, “ there is no reason for supposing that he disbelieved the religion, which he disobeyed. He forgot his duty, rather than disowned it.” Johnson’s Lives, vol. ii. p. 33. To which, by way of warning to those poets of the present day, who inherit his levity without his genius, it may be added, “ what consolation” (for so degrading a perversion of talents) “ can be had, Dryden has afforded, by living to repent, and to testify his repentance.” And let those light and unprincipled readers, or writers, who may have been vitiated by his example, “ go, and do likewise.”

\* 1 Cor. 26, 27.

gress and advancement of the gospel notwithstanding all the discouragements it met with, might be solely ascribed, as it ever must be ascribed, to the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Lastly, the manner of Christ's sufferings have a natural tendency to inspire us with that sincere benevolence to men, and patient submission to the will of God, of which he hath left us so perfect an example.

To the practice of these duties, the love of God should constrain us. For herein, says the Apostle, is manifested the love of God towards us, that he sent his only begotten Son to be the propitiation for our sins: and the argument concludes strongly; that if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another \*. And surely did our benevolence spring from a pure sense of that infinite goodness whence the Christian Dispensation took its rise, the streams that issue from it would flow in a constant even course; not diverted into narrow channels of partial affection—not pent up and confined for selfish purposes, or to make a vain

\* 1 John iv. 9, 10, 11.

display of it on some particular occasion ; but dispensing the several acts of our benevolence, as Christ did the benefits of redemption, freely and liberally to all ; giving that as the surest test of *our* gratitude, which he hath made the distinguishing character of *his* religion : for *hereby shall all men know that we are his disciples, if we have love one to another.*

But, if *iniquity* should abound, and *the love of many wax cold*—if we should be *rewarded evil for good*, and *hatred for our good will*—if in this world we must have tribulation, and it must needs be *that offences come*; we can still consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously \*.

In our patience therefore let us possess our souls ; and whatever we are called to suffer according to the will of God, let us commit ourselves to him, as into the hands of a faithful creator : looking up to Jesus the author and

\* 1 Peter ii. 2, 3.

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finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God \*, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

\* Heb. xiii. 2. Ibid. vii. 25.

S E R-

## SERMON XXIX.

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS PREPARATORY TO  
HIS GLORY.

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LUKE xxiv. 25, 26.

*He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

THE redemption of the world by Christ, the Son of God, and the expediency of his sufferings to that end, with his triumphant resurrection and entrance into his glory, is, by St. Paul, styled a *mystery* which was eternally purposed from the beginning of the world; but in other ages, was not so fully made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto us by prophets and apostles through the spirit.

It is, indeed, from such revelations of his will as God was pleased to make by *the prophets*, and especially by *Christ himself*, that all our knowledge of this merciful dispensation is derived. They teach us what human nature *was*, what it *is*, and what it *may be*; how happy by creation, how fallen by transgression, how restored by redemption! To these sacred records every one, in this protestant country, may have free access; and to them, our blessed Lord himself, very frequently appealed, both for the authority of his mission, the merit of his sufferings, and the truth of his resurrection, for they testified of him.

Even after he had perfected his obedience, as the great representative of human nature, and triumphed over death and the grave, he was no less solicitous to convince the reason and understanding of his disciples of the expediency of his sufferings, than to offer himself to the evidence of their senses for the certainty of his resurrection.

With this view he took occasion, on the very day that he rose from the dead, to enter into

into discourse upon the subject with two \* of them, in their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus; accosting them under the appearance of a stranger, lest their surprise at seeing him alive, might either disorder their attention, or their respect for his authority might influence their judgment.

Not

\* Who the other disciple that accompanied Cleopas was, seems not to be generally agreed among the commentators. Some have supposed it was Luke; which supposition is very incongruous with his preface to his gospel, in which he seems to have distinguished himself from those who were *eye-witnesses*, and transmitted the evangelical facts to him. Others, and among them, Dr. Lightfoot, have endeavoured to shew that Peter was here meant. But the silence of this other disciple, is by no means consistent with the forward character of St. Peter. Other reasons are offered by Dr. Doddridge, which induce a persuasion that, whoever was the companion of Cleopas, it was not that Apostle, Grotius, in his notes on Luke xxiv. 13. accounts for Origen's opinion that it was Peter, by reading *λευόντες* for *λευόντας*, in v. 34. which would make him and Cleopas the speakers, instead of the *eleven*, who, otherwise, are supposed to inform Cleopas and his companion, that Christ had appeared to Simon Peter; which is certainly a more natural construction, and more agreeable to the current of manuscripts.

Not that he wanted to *discover* their opinions, but to *correct* them. He knew they had considered him as the Messiah; who, according to their conceptions, was to have *redeemed Israel* from subjection to the Roman power: but he knew likewise that his crucifixion and death had entirely blasted all such hopes. This, they readily acknowledged, was the cause of the *sadness* and *dejection* in

Whatever might have been the opinion of the preacher, on this doubtful case, I am inclined to think, with Dr. Doddridge, that the other disciple was not one of the Apostles, but might possibly be one of the seventy, whose name is uncertain.

On these indifferent points of disputation, it is too often the case with divines, as with critics,

—“Rixatur de Janâ siepe caprinâ.”

Hor. Ep. Lib. i. 18, 15.

Were the rule of Grotius duly observed, it might moderate the spirit of contention.

“In his rebus fama antiquissima maxime debet esse fidei,”—though, if implicitly received, it would be found to blunt the acumen of criticism, and seem to ascribe such infallibility to antiquity, as would check the efforts of modern inquirers in the elucidation of truth.

Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis amica VERITAS.

which

which he found them ; and therefore, with a friendly kind of freedom, he upbraided them for their ignorance and prejudice, in not perceiving that the prophets had clearly foretold the *suffering* as well as *triumphant* part of the Messiah's office ; and that his humiliation and death were to precede his exaltation to a heavenly, not to an earthly throne. *O fools !* said he, *and slow of heart to believe all that the propbets have spoken : ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory ?*

As this question of our Lord directly refers both to the nature of the evidence for his being the Messiah, and for the expediency of his suffering in that character, and before he *entered into his glory* ; we may briefly inquire, whether the proofs, resulting from such evidence, are sufficient to produce a reasonable conviction of the truth of the Christian Dispensation, and its importance to human happiness ?

Here, then, it is to be observed, that a religious faith in Christ, as the instructor and redeemer of the world, includes a belief of many

many particulars, the proofs of which must now, rest upon evidence that is partly *human*, and partly *divine*; or, in other words, on the *testimony of history*, and the *spirit of prophecy*; for, although the miraculous works that he did, were, to those who saw them, incontestable proofs of the divinity of his mission, yet, even these can only be admitted by us, at this distance of time, on the credibility and integrity of the reporters, and a conviction of the heavenly doctrines they were intended to inforce,

Supposing, therefore, that we were possessed of no other evidence for the truth that is in Jesus, than what may be collected from the history of the New Testament, which, through so many ages and countries, hath been providentially delivered down to us; even in that case, our faith could not justly be imputed to an *over easy* credulity, supported, as it is, by attestations of a nature that few other transactions can pretend to; even of a number of witnesses, whose consistency and firmness, not the most racking tortures could ever shake.

But

But, beside this indisputable human testimony, a wise and gracious Providence had taken early care, that the world should be gradually prepared for an event, so wonderful in itself, and so replete with mercy to mankind, as the mission of Christ, by the spirit of prophecy, the strongest of all testimonies; that in *the fulness of time*, when he should come, the particulars foretold, and the description given, might be found to have their full and proper accomplishment in *him* only; and together with the internal evidence arising from the excellency of his doctrine, remain the standing means of conviction to every age and nation of the world.

It is remarkable too, that the many predictions relative to this merciful dispensation, were neither delivered by the same person, nor in the same age; but by a succession of prophets, at different periods, through a course of more than two thousand years; occasionally, indeed, intermixed with very striking descriptions of the various fortunes of the Jewish nation; their victories and defeats, their captivities and deliverance; according as they served idols, or obeyed the voice of

the

the living God : but still the principal object, of prophetic inspiration, was the universal deliverance of the nations from spiritual bondage.

Thus, of those holy men of old, *who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, we find some foretelling the very tribe and family from which the Messiah was to assume his human nature ; others the time and place ; together with the end and design of his coming : *those* describing the benevolent actions of his life, and the opprobrious manner in which he was to be put to death : *these* exulting at the view of his glorious resurrection, the unshaken establishment of his church and kingdom, and the free admission of the Gentiles to the gracious privileges of his gospel ; but all denouncing the dreadful punishments that were to be inflicted on those who *rejected* and *despised* him, and *would not that he should reign over them*.

Now, when all this is duly considered, ought there to remain the least shadow of doubt, whether he, *to whom give all the prophets witness* ; and with whose appearance, at the

the appointed time, so many remarkable incidents concurred, was the promised Messiah who was to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification? In vain, will the dispersed remnant of the Israelites hope to find, any other person to whose nature, and office, and character, the many particulars foretold will so exactly apply.

Let them carefully consult those sacred oracles of which, for many ages, their forefathers were the sole depositaries, and in which their latest posterity will be deeply interested; and let them say, whether they can there discover any other seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head? any other in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed? any whom, as Moses foretold, the Lord God would raise up, like unto him, to complete and perfect the divine œconomy?—And is it not for refusing to bear that prophet, that the Jews still continue to be a proverb, and a by-word, in all countries whither the Lord hath driven them? How long hath their sceptre departed from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet; and is any other Shiloh come?—Who else is that holy one, of the lineage of David, whose

whose hands and whose feet they pierced, but whose soul God would not leave in the grave, nor suffer his holy one to see corruption?—What other person can they fix on, who so exactly answered Isaiah's affecting description of the *man of sorrows*, who but the Messiah was to make the glory of the second temple greater than of the first, and yet was to be cut off, to make a reconciliation for iniquity, before the seventy weeks of Daniel, for the duration of the holy city, were determined?

Was not a general expectation of Christ \*, at

that

\* The reader will find a similar allusion to the authentic proofs of an universal expectation of the Messiah in the East and West, about the time of his incarnation, in Sermon xxiv. which, being accidentally omitted there, it may be not unseasonable here to adduce, in these scriptural times.

Beside scriptural evidence, we have that of the Jewish historian, who informs us, that his countrymen had been excited to the fatal war with the Romans, by the expectation of "a person rising from their nation, who should obtain the empire of the world."

"Ος κατα τον καιρον, εκεινον, απο της χαρας της αυτων εφετης της ουρανειν."

F. J.—De Bello Judaico. lib. vii. cap. 13. Oxonii

Hudson, 1729.

To

that period, the clear result of prophetic calculation? Why then did they mistake the prophetic object? — The answer is plain. — They looked for a *triumphant*, not a *meek and lowly* Messiah.

Fatal

to

To which may be added, the concurrent testimony of two eminent Roman historians, Tacitus and Suetonius; the first of whom has these remarkable words: “*Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valeferet Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur.*” C. Cornelii Taciti Historiar. lib. v. cap. 13.

“A persuasion was current with many, that it was contained in the ancient sacerdotal writings,” (the prophetical scriptures of the Old Testament,) “that about this time the East should prevail, and that those who should come out of Judea, should obtain the empire of the world.”

And Suetonius in Vespasiano, cap. iv. informs us, “*Percreuerat oriente toto vetus & constans opinio esse in Fatis, ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur.*” “An ancient and settled opinion had prevailed in all the East, that it was contained in the Fates, that at that time” (i. e. about the beginning of the Jewish war) “those who came out of Judea should obtain the dominion.”

Nor can a poetic testimony be omitted, which is a paraphrase on the prophet Isaiah, the fourth Eclogue of Virgil,

Fatal delusion ! to think it more concerned the glory of God to rescue the single nation of the Jews from subjection to a foreign power, because, with a mighty hand and out-stretched arm, he had once done it ; than to offer the means of redeeming the whole race  
of

Virgil, in which the poet borrows what was supposed to have been predicted by the Cumæan Sibyl concerning the Messiah, and applies it to Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus Cæsar : of which Mr. Pope observes, he wrote his imitation, " with this particular view, that the reader, by comparing the several thoughts, might see how far the images and descriptions of the prophet are superior to those of the poet." Advertisement to the sacred eclogue of Messiah, edition quarto, by Owen Ruffhead, Esq. London, 1769.

And the learned and ingenious Dr. Warton, with equal judgment and sensibility, in a note in his elegant translation of the famous Pollio, exclaims, " How much inferior is Virgil's poetry to Isaiah's ! The former has nothing comparable to these beautiful strokes : " that a little child shall lead the lion ;—that the very trees of the forest shall come to pay adoration." Virgil says only, *occidit et serpens* ; Isaiah adds a circumstance infinitely picturesque, that the sucking child shall play upon the hole of the asp ; and that the weaned child, a little older, and beginning to make use of its hands, shall put his fingers ~~on~~ the adder's den. There are certain critics who would

of mankind from the tyranny of sin and death! — But they would not discern *the time of their visitation, nor the things that belonged to their peace.* And yet, in this despised Jesus, they might have seen such manifest indications of

would never cease to admire these circumstances and strokes of nature, if they had not the ill fortune to be placed in the Bible."

Whoever compares the Pollio of Virgil with the passages of Isaiah, as Pope has done, from the parity both of sentiment and expression in the Prophet and Poet, cannot help drawing this conclusion, either that the Sibyl or the Poet had seen the prophetic writings. Suffice it to add, that in the oration of the Emperor Constantine to the Clergy, recorded in Eusebius, there is an acrostic of the Erythæan Sibyl (or certainly of some author before the birth of Christ) preserved in Greek heroics, the initial letters of which taken together, make ΙΗΣΟΤΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΤΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΣΤΑΤΡΟΣ; i. e. *Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour, the Cross.*

For complete satisfaction concerning this astonishing elogue, I beg leave to refer the classical reader to Bishop Lowth De Sacra Poesi Heb. Praelect. xxi. p. 284. edit. Oxon. 8vo. p. 436, &c. edit. Michaelis, 12mo. and to Mr. Spearman on the Septuagint, letter i. p. 20. Nor are the few notes of Mr. Ruffhead void of taste, learning, or piety.

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divine power, as surpassed even that of their former deliverer Moses—for Jesus spake, and it was done! He commanded, and nature was obedient to his word.

Surely then, if the Jews, in our days, did not still labour under a judicial blindness, they could not but see and acknowledge, that *this was he that should come*, and need not look for another. But the ways of Providence are just and holy! Converting the malicious devices of the wicked to their own prejudice; and as the dreadful imprecation of those who crucified the Lord of life, was prophetic of the punishment of themselves and of their children, the inflicting it may well be considered as an additional proof of the truth of the gospel; till they, and *all the ends of the earth*, shall see the salvation of God.

Such, in brief, is the evidence, for which we are referred to what is delivered by Moses and the prophets concerning the Christian Dispensation. And as each distinct article of our faith is essentially connected with every other; so the truth of the whole, and the

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infinite happiness we derive from it, must ever depend on the reality of the sufferings, the death, and resurrection of our Redeemer: Indeed, his incarnation and ministry, his death and resurrection, and ascension into glory, compose the main links of that mysterious chain by which mercy and truth are held together; so that were it possible to break any single one, (which the pride of human wisdom hath often attempted with much industrious impiety;) the whole must at once be dissolved, and fall to the ground.

The incredulous, however, have few or no objections to the evidence for the passion and death of Christ. They are content it should be believed that the humble Jesus, *the son of man*, was born in poverty, lived much of his time in obscurity, and had not long shewed himself openly, before he was publicly arraigned, condemned, and crucified.

It is not till, by his resurrection, he *proved* himself to be the *Son of God*; until he bursts the prison of the grave, until he leads captivity captive, until he triumphantly enters

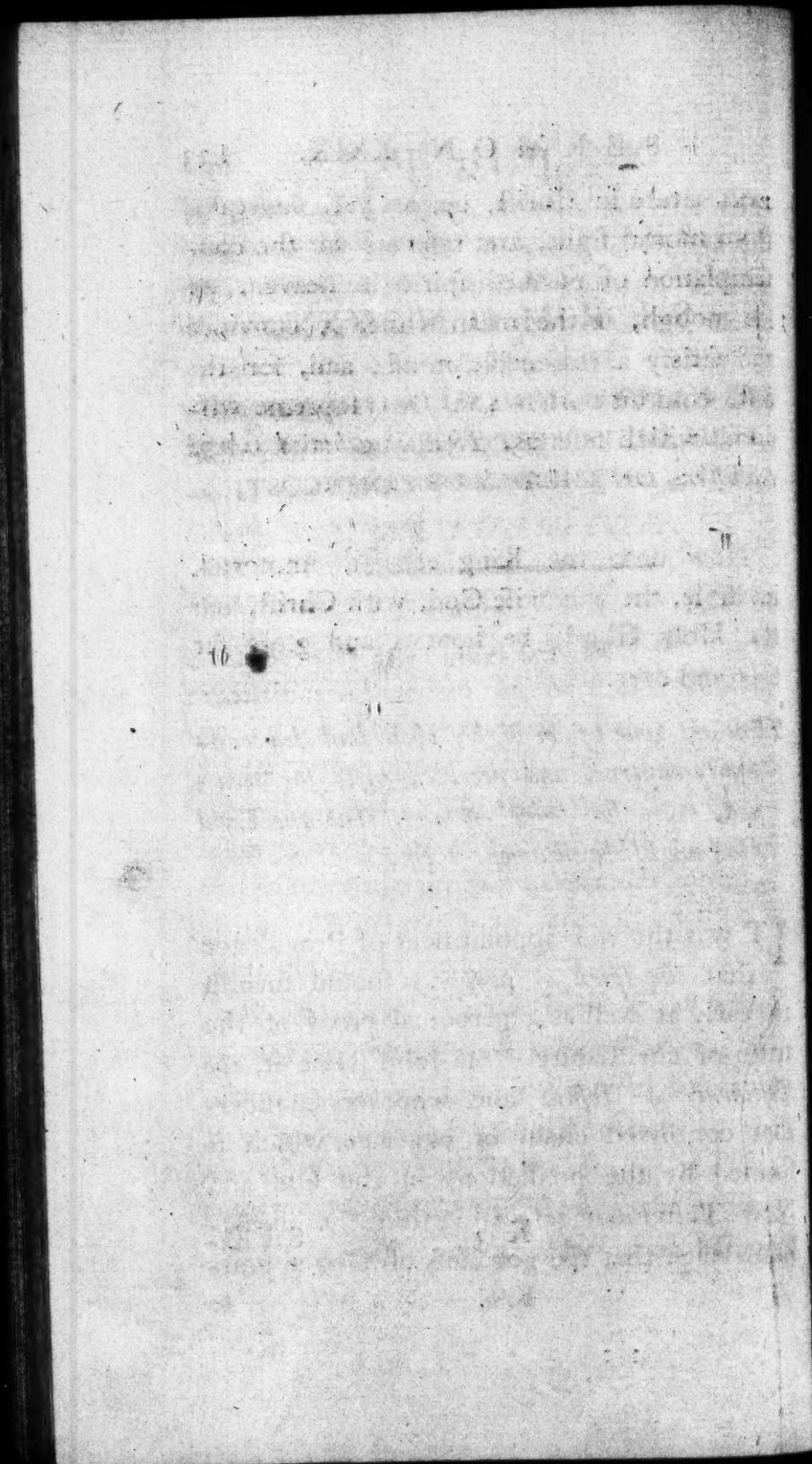
into his glory, and gives *gifts unto men*, that their presumptuous reason revolts against the authority of revelation; and that, *professing themselves wise, they really become fools*, and *flow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.*

But we, my brethren, have not so learned Christ. Happy as *we are*, in having revelation for our guide; and led by the hand of prophets and apostles into the otherwise undiscoverable paths of Providence, we see how justice and mercy proceed with equal pace, through the whole progress of man's redemption; to its final and effectual accomplishment, by the meritorious and voluntary sacrifice of Christ upon the cross—we behold through the all-sufficient merits of that oblation, the forfeited gift of immortality restored—an offended God proclaiming *peace, and good will towards men*: his justice satisfied, his mercy displayed, his will explained and enforced, and the authority of his laws vindicated and asserted.—But, if *clouds and thick darkness intercept some points of view; if the mysterious union of the divine and human*

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man nature in Christ, be, as yet, concealed from mortal sight, and reserved for the contemplation of purified spirits in heaven, we see enough, in the mean while, to convince and satisfy a reasonable mind; and, for the rest, commit ourselves to that supreme wisdom, which tells us, *Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to enter into his glory.*

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, with Christ, and the Holy Ghost, be honour and glory for ever and ever.



**S E R M O N XXX.**

**THE NATURE AND END OF THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS BESTOWED ON THE APOSTLES, ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST;**

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**PSALM lxviii. 18.**

*Thou art gone up on high; thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.*

IT was the wise appointment of Providence that the spirit of prophecy should furnish an early as well as a perpetual proof of the truth of christianity. St. John styles it, *the Testimony of Jesus:* and whoever considers that continued chain of evidence which is formed by the predictions in the Old and New Testament respecting him, must acknowledge that the goodness of God appears

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to have been equally solicitous for the conviction, and for the salvation of mankind. This testimony, extended through a long succession of ages to the present times, hath, at every period, acquired a visible increase of strength and brightness, and will continually shine more and more, till all the ends of the world shall *see and confess that Jesus is the Christ, to the glory of God the Father.*

From these scriptures, given by inspiration, we can trace out, not only the many predictions relative to the Messiah's character and conduct, that were exactly accomplished in his person, while he condescended to dwell on earth; but those likewise respecting the completion of his gracious promises after his resurrection and ascension into heaven.

An instance of this we have in the psalm from whence the text is taken; which, although its immediate object was to celebrate some memorable and glorious events in the reign of David; such as recovering the ark of the Lord from the Philistines; the placing it in a tabernacle prepared for it on Mount

Sion; the decisive victories he gained over the Syrians, the numerous captives he led in triumph to Jerusalem, and the royal gifts and bounties which, agreeably to the practice of those times, he bestowed on his principal officers—is nevertheless considered by St. Paul as a prophetic description of the triumphant ascension of our blessed Lord, and of the miraculous powers, or gifts of the Holy Ghost, which, as on this day, were conferred on the apostles. The Apostle is exhorting his Ephesian converts, *to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called*, from the consideration of the divine assistance which was given to every one, *according to the measure of the gift of Christ*. And he quotes the very words of the psalmist to confirm them in the grace they had received \*.—*Wherefore, he saith, when he ascended up on high; he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*—And the psalmist adds, *Yea, even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.*

Here, then, before I proceed to consider the nature and design of these gifts, let us

\* Ep'st. iv. 8.

briefly

briefly observe how exactly this prediction marks out to us the progressive steps by which the divine economy of grace was to be carried on, and completed by the eternal Son of God, who was to redeem the world, and the holy spirit of God, who was to sanctify it.

The prediction, we see, commences at that period, when the Captain of our salvation, having triumphed over sin and death, and all the powers of darkness, (which is here signified by his leading captivity captive,) was himself to ascend and be exalted far above all heavens, there to be crowned with glory and honour, and to receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost, that he might confer them upon others. But on whom were these gifts to be first and principally conferred?—not upon *the wise of this world*, not upon *the mighty*, not upon *the noble*. And for what end were they conferred? not to flatter the pride, to promote the interests, or, in anywise, to gratify the views of the vain, the selfish, or the ambitious: for they were of a spiritual and heavenly nature—were to enable the apostles to enlarge the extent of Christ's spiritual kingdom; to convince

convince the gainsayers ; to confirm the believers, and to give them a mouth and wisdom which all their *adversaries* should not be able to resist. For these ends the spirit, who searcheth all things, chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty \* :—And the intention in such a choice is evident. A few poor, unlearned, but honest men, could not be supposed to have so much influence as to draw the whole world after them ; nor so much contrivance and subtlety, as to impose upon and deceive it.

But, although the apostles, as the chosen friends of Christ, and the faithful witnesses of his resurrection, were to be the first and immediate objects of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, yet, in this prophecy, they are said to be received for his *enemies also* : and the reason assigned is, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

Here then we may assert, that the Jews were undoubtedly the enemies of Christ ; for

\* 1 Cor. i. 27.

*he was despised and rejected of them, and by their wicked hands crucified and slain—nevertheless, for their benefit, were the gifts here spoken of, first of all dispensed; and, as many as repented and were baptized in the name of Christ, became partakers of them. The Gentiles also were his enemies, because they were the enemies of God, and worshipped the creature more than the Creator: yet, on them too were poured out the gifts of the Holy Ghost.—The Christian religion was to be of universal comprehension. The wall of partition was to be broken down: and in every nation, he that should fear God, and work righteousness, was to be accepted of him\*:* so that henceforth, as the psalmist clofeth his prediction, *the Lord God was to dwell among them.* For, when his peculiar residence in the Jewish Temple should have answered the great purposes of his providence, in preserving the knowledge and worship of his name, at least in one part of the world, until the proper time should come for a general revelation of his will;—from that period the spirit of God was to dwell in the hearts of all, both Jews and Gentiles, who should seriously embrace,

\* Acts x. 35.

and

and sincerely endeavour to comply with, the terms of that better covenant. And hence all faithful Christians are, by the Apostle, styled *the temple of the living God*, and their bodies *the temples of the Holy Ghost*.—With such too, that divine spirit is said to dwell, and to abide; to fill them with all joy in believing; and, by co-operating with their own endeavours, to realize those exceeding great and precious promises, which will make them partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust \*.

But, as the best illustration of this prophecy is to be found in its accomplishment, it will be proper to consider, what was the *nature* of those gifts to which the text alludes, and for *what purposes* they were dispensed; from whence it will appear, that the means for establishing the christian religion, and for the perpetual support of it, were wisely adapted to promote the glory of God, and the salvation and happiness of man.

And here, in taking a summary view of those extraordinary gifts and graces that were

\* 2 Peter i. 4.

conferred upon the apostles and first converts to christianity, after their Lord had triumphantly ascended into heaven, it may be sufficient to mention the supernatural gift of tongues, the power of working miracles, and the divine help of inspiration.

Of these several endowments, the immediate knowledge and use of different languages, which the apostles had never learnt, was both the first that was dispensed, and the first that was practised.

Indeed the early occasion, that offered for the practice of it, was not less extraordinary than the gift itself. For, at the very time when the apostles were endowed with it, the city of Jerusalem was full of devout Jews of every nation and language under heaven, who had resorted thither to keep the annual feast of Pentecost. There the apostles were ordered to abide until they should be endowed with power from on high. They had likewise been ordered to go into all the world, to preach the gospel to every creature. But they were neither told a reason for the first command, nor how they should be enabled to execute what

was

was implied in the second. For if they were to preach the gospel to all nations, it was necessary they should be able to speak in the language of all nations. But how, without a divine interposition, were so many various languages to be acquired by men of their age and station? In the ordinary way of learning them, what a length of time, what intense application would have been requisite, to qualify them for such an arduous undertaking? and, in that case, so slow would have been the progress which the gospel must have made in the world, that it could not have furnished an argument for its divine authority as it now does, and always hath done, from the wonderful and speedy manner in which it was propagated.

Besides, it is to be observed that a course of so many years as the apostles must have spent in learning languages, before they could have planted the gospel in all, or indeed in any distant countries, would have been inconsistent with what had been declared by our blessed Lord himself, that before the city and temple of Jerusalem should be destroyed, (an event which, it is well known, did actually happen

happen in little more than forty years after the prediction)—his gospel should be preached in all the world—so rapid was the progress of the apostles' doctrine, assisted, as they were, by the miraculous gift of tongues, which we are this day assembled devoutly to commemorate !

I need not repeat the Evangelist's description of the wonderful manner in which the Holy Spirit communicated this miraculous gift to the eleven apostles ; to whom the instantaneous effect of its influence on their understandings, and faculties of speech, was, at the same time, a convincing proof of their divine appointment to the apostolic office, and a powerful encouragement to undertake it. The multitude also, who, on the report of what had happened, came together to the place where the apostles were assembled, might well be astonished, when they heard those whom they knew to be Galileans, men of a rude provincial dialect \* ; and who, but a moment

\* “ Thou art a Galilean, and thy speech discovereth thee,” Matt. xxvi. 73. “ The dialect of the Galileans, (says Mr. Parkhurst, in his new edition of his ingenious and

ment before, could speak in no other language, now able to converse with Partheans, Medes, and Elamites; with strangers of Rome, with Cretes and Arabians, and explain to each, in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God.

And, here, we see the wisdom of Providence, in dispensing this necessary endowment, at a time, when the principal Jews of

and elaborate Greek and English Lexicon,) seems to have been unpolished and corrupt, which probably proceeded from their great communication and mixture with the neighbouring heathen; of which Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 1103. edit. Amstel, takes notice, Ταῦλα μεν προσαρχία (i. e. of Judea), τα πωλλα δ' ὡς ἔκαστα εἰσιν από φυλῶν οικεμένων μικῆσι, εκ τε Αἰγυπτίων εθνῶν, καὶ Αραβίων, καὶ Φοινικῶν; whence their country is called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, Isaiah ix. 1. Matt. iv. 15. 1 Mac. iv. 15. The Thalmudists in the tract שירובין, tell us, “As for the men of Judea, because they were accurate in their language (תְּלִשָׁן יְהוּדָה), the law was confirmed in their hands; but as for the men of Galilee, because they were not accurate in their language, the law was not confirmed in their hands;” and to prove their inaccuracy, they assert in the same place, that the Galileans did not, in speaking, distinguish טר a lamb, טר wool, טר a he-af, and טר wine. See more on this subject in Buxtorf’s Lexicon Thalmud, &c. under גָּלִיל and in Wetstein’s note on Matt. xxvi. 73.”

the whole world were collected together in a place where they might either be eye witnesses of the fact, or examine into the truth of it: and who, by carrying the impression it made upon them into their several countries and places of abode, might, in some degree, be prepared for such further means of conviction, as might afterwards be proposed to them.

The apostles, thus endowed with the gift of speaking strange languages, were likewise empowered to work miracles; the one to prove the divine authority of their mission; the other to facilitate their propagating the gospel among all nations; and both enabling them to convince the reason of mankind, by appealing to their understanding and senses. For who could have done the works that they did, *except God were with them?* Hence the miracles wrought by the apostles carry the same test of truth with those of their divine Master.—They all tended to the same benevolent purposes; were all wrought to remove either the natural, or moral infirmities of mankind, and to conciliate their affections

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to a religion, whose distinguishing characters are love, benevolence, and truth.

But scarcely would the light of truth have reached us ; certainly not in the same brightness, purity and freedom, wherein we now enjoy it ; if, beside the gifts already mentioned, the apostles had not likewise been endowed with the more durable and extensive gift of inspiration. By the effectual working of this divine power, they were infallibly guided into all truth—had all things brought to their remembrance that their blessed Master had either said, or done, or suffered : and thus, the scriptures, given by inspiration of God, contain all things necessary for salvation, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works \*.

Let us, then, make these scriptures the constant rule of our faith and conduct ; for unless we live as becometh the gospel of Christ, it is to no purpose, to no useful purpose, that God sent his Son into the world, to instruct

\* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

us in righteousness, and redeem us from misery—it is to no useful purpose to *us*, that his Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in a miraculous manner, to guide them into all truth ; and that the ordinary, not the extraordinary assistance of it is promised to all sincere Christians. Let us not, therefore, grieve the Holy Spirit of God, which we always do, when we fall into any sin ; and still more, when we indulge any habitual and presumptuous sin. In a word, as we profess ourselves Christians, let us take care to live as becometh that profession ; and let us shew by the practice of every virtue which our reasonable nature, and the christian revelation require of us, that *we have a right judgment in all things, and walk worthy of the vocation whereunto we are called, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## S E R M O N XXXI.

THE HOLY SPIRIT THE GUIDE OF TRUTH.

JOHN XVI. 13.

*When he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.*

THE particular duty which this sacred festival \* suggests to us, is a thankful commemoration of those miraculous powers and abilities that were poured out upon the Apostles and first teachers of the christian religion, by the descent of the Holy Ghost. As this merciful dispensation was graciously intended to be the means of restoring our fallen and depraved nature to the favour of God, and of exalting us to higher degrees of virtue and happiness, than our weak unassisted reason could attain too; so when the blessed

\* Whit-Sunday.]

Author of our faith, *for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven*\*, and veiling his glory in the poor covering of humanity, had instructed mankind by his *doctrine*, relieved them by his *miracles*, made an atonement for them by his *death*, risen again for their *justification*, and proved himself to be the *Son of God with power*—When he had given these amazing proofs of his obedience to God and his love to man ; he had *finished the work that his Father gave him to do*: but, without further interpositions of the divine Spirit, neither the knowledge of these wonderful events, nor the religious and moral truths that were to be established by them, would have been so universally propagated, as this last and most perfect revelation of the will of God required. For, how bright soever *the sun of righteousness* shone out upon one part of the earth, *to be the glory of his people Israel*, and to guide *them* into all truth, yet the sphere of his personal influence was too contracted to be a light to lighten the *Gentiles*, and for all the *ends of the world to see the salvation of God*.—His course also was soon *run*; and he went down in a troubled and doubtful sky;

\* Nicene Creed.

but

but he went down only to shew his *wonders among the dead*; and his *faithfulness in the land where all things are forgotten*.—Again, he arose with *healing in his wings*: dispelled every shadow of distrust in his desponding disciples: cheered and animated them to the glorious work they were to undertake; and after appointing *them* to be the *lights of the world* in his stead, to go and diffuse the bright beams of truth through all nations, was *himself* taken up from among them into heaven, to a state of glory and exaltation, (expressed by his sitting on the right hand of God) where he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

Hitherto then did our Saviour *personally* conduct this merciful dispensation; but from the great period of his ascension, other means were to be used, and other agents commissioned to proceed with, and complete what yet remained to be done: not indeed by the arts of human policy, or the enticing words of man's wisdom; but by the influence and demonstration of the spirit, and the natural force of truth: that, as St. Paul observes, our *faith* might not seem to be planted by the *wisdom of men*, but by the *power of God*.

That it was *not* planted by the wisdom of men, the enemies of christianity will readily allow; and accordingly they omit no occasion of attempting to expose the ignorance and incapacity of those by whom it was planted. If by this is meant the ignorance of the apostles in religious and moral truth; we may fairly leave the gospel to speak for itself. —If their ignorance in points of literature, in the arts and refinements of worldly wisdom; the objection, instead of weakening the foundations of christianity, will be found to strengthen and confirm them; for then the proper conclusion will be, “ That the means, whereby the apostles were enabled to accomplish the establishment of the gospel, must have been every way as *miraculous*, as the end was *merciful*.”

Now in order to discover the justness of this conclusion, it will be sufficient to take a short view of their powers and abilities, both before, and after, the extraordinary event that we this day celebrate.

In the first case, then, we must allow that the apostles, before the descent of the Holy Ghost,

Ghost, were, what the evangelists and their own accounts represent them, as ignorant of the true character of the Messiah, as the *best* of their countrymen; as *unlearned* in every thing else as the *meanest*. Brought up only to such hardy and common employments, as barely procured them common necessaries, their religious knowledge must have been acquired, rather from what they *heard*, than from what they *read*; a capacity to read the *law and the prophets*, being more than was expected in our Saviour himself: such uncommon knowledge, in one of his apparent rank, causing his audience, when he read them a passage from the prophet Isaiah, to ask, with some surprise,—*How knoweth this man letters, having never learnt?* True it is, that the disciples, during the time of our Saviour's ministry, seemed desirous that no part of his instruction should escape them.—*Declare unto us this parable*, was a request their honest curiosity often prompted them to make: and sometimes, when the meaning was so very obvious, as to produce a reply of more than usual sharpness—*Ye fools! are ye yet without understanding!* And though often instructed in the end and design of his coming, often shewn

shewn the expediency, and even the precise time and manner of his death and resurrection ; yet *they understood none of these things, neither knew they the things that were spoken.* — Their thoughts were too intent upon the *grandeur* and *elevation* they expected from the *temporal dominion* of their Lord and Master, to comprehend the meaning of such predictions. There had even been *a strife among them, which of them should be the greatest* in his kingdom ;—and in his last conversation with them, before his crucifixion, when he would have weaned them from this mistaken opinion, and given them some idea of what they were to do, and endure, for his sake, he found it in vain to contend with their prejudices ; and only observed, that he had *many things to say unto them ; but, as he adds, ye cannot bear them now.* *Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.*

But are we not to find their *understanding more opened*, as to scripture knowledge at least, after they had seen the verification of their Lord's predictions, and during the short, but important interval of forty days, between his  
refur-

resurrection and ascension? It must be confessed they were not.—We still see them possessed with the same prejudice: still labouring under the same ignorance of the true end and design of this dispensation. Nay, they seem to have considered the resurrection of our Saviour, rather as an event that *coincided* with their interested views, and promised a *speedy* accomplishment of their wishes; than as the *chief corner-stone* whereon the whole structure of christianity was to be erected; and what alone could give it stability and duration. After so signal a proof of his being the promised Messiah, confirmed, by his own declaration, that *all power* was given him in *heaven and earth*, they were impatient to enquire, whether the first manifestation of that power, would be to *restore again the kingdom to Israel*, to rescue their country from its hated subjection to the Roman yoke, and to *appoint them a kingdom, who had continued with him in his temptations, as his Father had appointed him?*—Strange delusion! he had solemnly professed that *his kingdom was not of this world*; for it was to be *an everlasting kingdom*; and *a dominion that should endure throughout all ages.*—And could his accession to it be more

more gloriously distinguished, than by triumphing over the universal empire of *sin and death*? or his reign ushered in with a more gracious act of clemency, than opening the prison to the bound, and leading *captivity captive*?—But the spiritual meaning of these figurative expressions, was not yet brought within the reach of their discernment. They were to be led to it only by that spirit of truth, who was *to guide them into all truth*.

(1) And now, consider them under the direction and influence of *this* divine instructor, and these same apostles appear to be almost instantaneously transformed into other men.—New conceptions, new and extraordinary powers and abilities sprung up in their minds, quick as the sudden irruption of that sacred flame which attended the descent of the Holy Spirit.—Strong as that *rushing mighty wind* that proclaimed his arrival. Immediately all ignorance, and prejudice, and selfishness, vanished and disappeared, *as a dream when one awaketh*. The *eyes of their understanding* were now fully opened; and the key of scripture knowledge, unlocking all the types of the Mosaic, and the predictions of the prophetic writings,

writings, was given them to lay open and unfold to the world *the exceeding great riches of the grace and favour of God, through Christ Jesus.* They now clearly comprehended this wonderful scheme of mercy, which began with time, and will extend through eternity.

—They saw how it was founded in the relation that mankind bore to the gracious author of it, by whose *power* they were created, by whose *providence* they are governed, and through whose *merits* they may obtain a glorious immortality.—They perceived by what progressive steps it was revealed, from that glimmering ray of hope which was shed upon the first offenders, to *the fulness of time*, when *the word was made flesh, and dwelt among them, with the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* Many particulars of his ministry had indeed been forgotten, many relating to his office had been mistaken by them: but *these* were now corrected, and *those* brought back to their remembrance. The sublime doctrines he taught, the pure morality he inculcated, the beneficent miracles he wrought, the spotless example he exhibited, and the meritorious sufferings he endured; were all as punctually recol-

recollected as they were faithfully recorded.— And hence the *scriptures*, thus given by inspiration, are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The subject leads us not to consider the extraordinary powers wherewith the apostles were endowed, of working miracles and speaking in strange tongues, any further than to observe, that as the one facilitated the communication of truth to people of different nations and languages, and the other helped to draw their attention to it; so both enabled them to make a direct appeal to the *reason* of mankind, through the clear and convincing evidence of their *senses*. The miracles also which the apostles every where did work, were almost all calculated to conciliate the affections to a religion, whose amiable and benevolent spirit was equally exerted to remove the natural and moral infirmities of human nature. And it is very remarkable, that the only miraculous *punishments* they ever wrought, were both inflicted in vindication of that truth which they were appointed to establish: one,

for

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for an attempt to elude the all-discriminating power of the divine spirit; or as St. Luke expresses it, for lying to the Holy Ghost; and the other for endeavouring to obstruct its operation.—Nay, there seems to have been a peculiar propriety in the *manner* of these punishments. *Ananias and Sapphira*, for withholding the means of life from the poor disciples, were themselves *deprived of life*; and *Elymas the sorcerer*, for trying to intercept the light of truth from the Roman deputy, was *struck with blindness*.

Thus guided into all truth, and furnished with the most efficacious means of establishing it, the apostles out of weakness were made strong; were inspired with a dignity and strength of expression, that amazed and confounded all who heard them; and if not learned, in what the world calls learning, they were however wise unto salvation.—And what less than this wisdom, together with a full and sensible assurance of that supernatural assistance, which on all occasions was vouchsafed them, could have induced a set of poor, illiterate, inelegant men, at once to assume the rank and character of instructors, and reformers

formers of the whole world?—Nay, but to preach up Jesus and the resurrection—to attempt to found a new religion upon the assertion, that God had raised from the grave a man, who died the death of a common malefactor—to offer remission of sins, and an eternity of happiness in his name—to press the irksome duties of reformation and repentance, as the condition of that happiness—to break down the wall of partition between the Jew and the Gentile—to abolish the consecrated rites of the one, and the pompous pageantry of the other—to overthrow the long established altars of idolatry; the rich shrines and magnificent temples of Pagan worship; and upon their ruins to erect a pure and spiritual system of religion—adorned with no other graces than faith in the one true God, hope in the merits of Christ, and an unbounded charity and good-will for all men.—What was all this but to encounter the passions, the prejudices, the interests, and the vices, of every nation upon earth?—What, but to expose themselves to those stripes, and imprisonments, and sundry kinds of death, which their divine Master had foretold, and which accordingly happened to them?—And yet we know,

and glory in the knowledge, that christianity did make its way to the reason and conscience of mankind, through all this opposition ; and that even in the few years, that the malice of the world permitted these holy men to live in it, there was scarce a city or county through the extensive dominions of the Roman empire, but the truths of the gospel were therein planted, *and brought forth seed ; some thirty, some fifty, some an hundred fold.* — *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*

*Where then is the wise, as St. Paul asks, where is the scribe ? where the disputer of this world ? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?* For in regard to sacred truths, how deficient are all the admired writings of antiquity ? how unaffected their most refined and exalted sentiments ? how flat their most laboured disquisitions on the nature and perfections of the Deity, and the sanctions of human duty, in comparison of the word of God, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. Examine their sentiments on these points, and you will find some ingeniously perverting the natural

light they had ; others lamenting they had not more ; and all entirely in the dark, as to many of those important truths that *have been brought to light through the gospel*. Their writings indeed, in point of composition, may have some advantages, which those of the evangelists and apostles have not. Their language may be more pure \*, their thoughts better

\* This notion of the want of purity in the language of sacred scripture, is not peculiar to the Bishop. The most learned Greek critics agree with Dr. Middleton, that, " though some writers, prompted by a false zeal, have attempted to defend the purity of the scripture Greek, their labour has been idly employed."

Essay on the gift of tongues. Dr. Middleton's Works, vol. ii. p. 91.

" A spurious opinion, begotten in the Jewish church by superstition, and nursed up by mistaken piety in the christian, hath almost passed into an article of faith. That the language of scripture was dictated by the Holy Spirit in such a manner, that the writers were but the passive organs through which every word and letter were conveyed. And as superstition seldom knows where to stop, the Mahometans improved upon this fancy, and represent their scriptures as sent down from heaven, ready written. Having got into so fair a train, the next theological question in honour of the Alcoran was, whether it was *created or uncreated?* and the orthodox determination, we may be sure, was in favour of the latter.

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better methodized, and their periods more graceful. But the gospel stood in no need of such laboured finishings; but strikes the mind with that beautiful simplicity, which will ever be the natural result of truth. And however incredulity may insinuate, that, "if the sacred penmen had wrote as well as spoke, only as the Spirit gave them utterance, their writings must needs have been more pure

A rabbinical hyperbole, concerning the invariable reading of the copies of the law, seems to have given the Mahometan doctors a hint of this conceit, concerning the physical nature of the Alcoran. Orobio speaking the language of the Rabbins says, "Liber Mosis est ita perfectus & purus, atque ab erroribus alienus, ab ejus conditore per tot saecula variis in nationibus servatus, ut cætera naturalia quæ Deus non corruptioni en posita creavit; ut cæli, sol, & astra, quæ a suâ formatione non majore providentiâ incorrupta, servantur & subsistunt, quam divini legis libri, qui nunquam aliquam mutationem experti fuerunt." Apud Limb. p. 147.

Bishop Warburton on Grace, vol. i. p. 42.

The learned and ingenious author above quoted, draws a conclusion from the impurity of style in the christian scriptures, in favour of such an inspiration as best served the cause of truth.

"The conclusion from the whole is this—that a nominal or local barbarity of style, is so far from being an objection to it's miraculous acquisition, that it is one mark of such extraordinary original." Ibid. p. 60.

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and perfect :" yet, surely, it is more suitable to the dignity of their divine Instructor, to suppose them left to express the ideas he suggested in such words and phrases as occurred to them ; than that he should guide and conduct them with all the exactness of verbal criticism, and grammatical accuracy.—In a word, the book of Grace, and that of Nature, are both the production of the same infinitely wise author. It was the same eternal *spirit*, which at the creation *moved upon the face of the waters*, and *commanded light to shine out of darkness*, that hath illuminated the minds of *prophets, apostles, and other chosen men of God*. The truths revealed to them have been written for our instruction ; and are as much the light of the moral as the sun is of the natural world.—May those lights continue to *shine more and more to a perfect day* ; opening to us a right understanding in every branch of religious and social duty ; and daily producing in us their proper fruits of *love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance* :—for if these virtues be duly cultivated in us, we shall neither be barren, nor unsatisfactory, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## S E R M O N XXXII.

THE DUTY OF SELF-EXAMINATION, AS  
PREPARATORY TO THE DUE PARTICI-  
PATION OF THE LORD's SUPPER, STATED  
AND EXPLAINED.

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I COR. xi. 28.

*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

W H O E V E R seriously considers the business and interruptions of the present life, and looks forward to the important concerns of the future, will think it a point of the greatest prudence, so to state the account between the frailties of the man, and the duties of the christian, that he may at least be able to judge how much the former stands indebted to the latter; and what methods he must take to adjust the difference. For what

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between the hurry and eagerness with which we art apt to pursue our temporal affairs, and the time spent upon the civilities, the relaxations, and amusements of life; there would be great danger of entirely forgetting our duty to God, and the concerns of religion, if we did not wisely set apart some stated periods for examining into the state and condition of our souls, by calling our thoughts off from worldly objects, and retiring within ourselves to *commune with our own hearts*. And certainly, there can be no time more proper for this duty, than when we are called upon to renew our sacramental covenant with our blessed Saviour—to acknowledge our faith in his merits, and to profess a grateful remembrance of all that he did and suffered for us. As this is the highest act of devotion we can perform, and, if duly performed, will be attended with the greatest spiritual advantages we can expect, how careful ought we to be in preparing and disposing our souls for the worthy participation of this heavenly banquet? not that *self-examination* is a duty particularly incumbent upon the *communicant* alone, but must, and ought to be the practice of every one, who is desirous to lead a good and vir-

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tuous life; and is indeed as necessary to entitle us to a successful acceptance of our prayers and thanksgivings, as to assure to us the spiritual advantages of the holy sacrament. Nay, the duty of examining ourselves may be said to flow from the very condition of our nature, as we are frail and fallible, but at the same time rational and accountable beings. So that it was not first introduced by christian religion, but may be found in the precepts of the philosophers, the exhortations of the prophets, and the practice of good men in all ages of the world; and, indeed, the single consideration that we must hereafter be accountable for the works done in the body, and receive our final sentence according to what we have done; especially as our blessed Lord hath expressly enjoined us to do this in remembrance of him; should be sufficient to enforce the frequent attention to this important duty: but the further consideration that the time of our probation is both short and uncertain, should be an additional motive to the observance of it. If we look into the world, into the busy commercial part of it, we generally find their affairs to be in the most flourishing way, who take care to keep their accounts

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clear, and regularly stated: and not to leave that to be entered to-morrow, which ought to be done to-day: whereas they who live at random, keep no stated account, and seldom or ever look into their affairs, to examine what profit or loss they make, often find themselves ruined and undone before they are aware. The case is much the same in our spiritual concerns. The good and faithful servant will always be ready to give an account of the improvement of those talents committed to his care, that he may deserve to be admitted into the joy of his Lord; whilst the slothful and unprofitable servant, who neglects the opportunities of improving his talent and growing in grace, will be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Since then we know not at what hour the time of our probation will be closed, we ought always to have a watchful eye over our own conduct; to examine our hearts with all diligence, and try whether there is any way of wickedness in them, and therefore the great apostle in another place recommends the exercise of this duty, as the best method, whereby we may know that our hearts are right towards God, and established

blished in the faith which we profess in his Son Christ Jesus. *Examine yourselves*, says he, *whether ye be in the faith; prove your own-selves*\*: and he enjoins it in the text as more particularly necessary to prepare us for the due celebration of the most solemn office of our religion; that we may not behave like those rash and inconsiderate Corinthians, who repaired to the table of the Lord in a disorderly and tumultuous manner, with less decency and ceremony than if it had been to the table of any respectable friend. But there is no reason to apprehend any such irreverent behaviour from you, who cannot but have a juster sense of this holy institution: and as the word which we render *examine* †, in

\* 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

† Δοκιμαζετω. It is used in the latter senses, Rom. ii. 18. Δοκιμαζεις τα διαφεροντα. "Thou approvest the things that are more excellent." Or, according to Beza and Elsner, thou *discernest*, or accurately distinguishest, things that differ. Exploras quæ *discrepant*, says Beza, Vulg. *Probas utiliora*. Cappellus, Hammond, and Erasmus, defend our translation. Sed δοκιμαζειν est, ita *probare*, sive *explorare*, ut *approbes*, ut constat ex collat. Rom. xii. 2. and xiv. 22. 1 Cor. xi. 28. Gal. vi. 4. Ephes. v. 10. Sensus q. d. acutè & diligenter expl as  
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in the original more frequently signifies to *approve* or *discern*; so the sense of the text, as applicable to Christians in general, and ourselves in particular, may be thus explained.—“ Let a man approve himself to his own conscience, as one who has a serious and hearty desire to obey the precepts, and to comply with the positive duties of his religion; and let him be careful to discern whether he comes to celebrate this sacred ordinance, without any view to worldly advantage, but with a grateful remembrance of the love of Christ who died for him; with an unshaken trust in his merits, an unfeigned charity for his fellow-creatures, and a firm resolu-

& explorando discernis. Ham.—Approbet se, i. e. approbatum fide & doctrinā christianā se exhibeat. M. P. Synop. vol. iv. p. 482.

*Δοκιμαζω* is also used in a similar manner by the Clas-  
fics. *Δοκιμασας. αντι τη κρινας.* Qui judicavit. Qui ex-  
ploravit. Suidæ. Lex. vol. i. p. 613. L. K. Cantab.  
1705.

*Δοκιμασας. κρινας, εξελασας.*

Hefychii 1018. Joan. Alberti. L. Bat. 1746.

Vide etiam Harpocrationem in verbum *Δοκιμασθεις*  
p. 133. In Decem Rethores. Gr. & Lat. 4to. Lugd.  
Bat. 1683.

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tion of amendment of life. These are the principal qualifications for the right performance of this duty: and, as every person may soon judge of the sincerity of their own heart; even while so, if their heart condemn them not in any of these particulars, or if they steadfastly purpose to lead a new life, then may they safely eat of this bread and drink of this cup.

But here I cannot help observing, that, although the Christian Religion is universally professed amongst us, and in general a pretty regular attendance is given on the other offices of the church, yet too few there are, and I speak it with concern, who discharge this most essential part of a Christian's duty.

Possibly this may, with some persons, be owing to a persuasion, that they cannot be duly prepared to receive this holy communion, without previously going through a whole week's self-examination, agreeably to the rules laid down by some pious and well-meaning authors for that purpose. That such devotional books, if well chosen, may be of great use and benefit to young persons especially,

cially, cannot be denied ; but because some have not always leisure, nor others the ability to peruse and conform to those rules, will be no sufficient excuse for their always abstaining from this sacred office : since the most busy and illiterate, if they be sincere, may well be able to examine, whether they are disposed to repent them of their sins, and to embrace the means of pardon and grace which are offered in the holy scriptures. In the remaining part of this discourse, I shall further enlarge upon this duty of self-examination, and then point out those christian virtues, which our holy religion requires of them who come to the Lord's Supper.

Now self-examination, in the first and most obvious sense, signifies, to try and search into the depths and secrets of things, to consider the nature, tendency, and consequences of every proceeding. But as relative to the point before us, it is to take a strict and exact survey of the present state and temper of our minds in regard to our religious and moral conduct ; to scrutinize all our thoughts and actions, and weigh them in the balance of impartial reason : to follow sin through all its wind-

windings and mazes, till at last we come at a just knowledge of our spiritual state, and so resolve to take heed to our ways, as to turn our feet unto God's testimonies.

By this method, we shall find in what duties we are defective, with what sin we are most defiled; what particular vice is to be destroyed and rooted out, and what virtue is to be cultivated and improved. For indeed the true end of examination is to purify the conscience; but this cannot be effected without amendment of life. For in vain is it to enter into our chamber *and commune with our own hearts*, unless we fully resolve, and heartily endeavour to supply what we find defective, to repair what is defaced, to cleanse what is polluted, and to complete what is imperfect, by growing more and more in grace and virtue, till we be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Thus let the blood-thirsty man, after examining himself, learn how to stifle his revenge, and kill his passions. Let the deceitful man, resolve to speak the truth to his neighbour, and not over-reach or defraud him in any matter. Let the covetous rise from the dead, from his earthly desires

desires in which he is buried ; and the proud condescend and humble himself to those that are of low degree : let the contentious bind himself in the bonds of peace ; and the fornicators and adulterers crucify their affections and lusts. In a word, let every one resolve to resist and subdue that unlawful passion which is most predominant, that sin *which doth most easily beset him*: and when he hath thus duly examined and approved himself, when he thus steadfastly purposes to lead a new life, and *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*, then may he *eat of that bread, and drink of that cup*.

To promote and assist him in these good purposes, let him be frequent in the use of meditation and prayer. The holy sacrament itself is, in its nature and design, the most solemn prayer of all ; and resembles that merciful intercession, which our glorious High Priest is continually making for us at the right hand of God. And with respect to us his creatures, prayer is not only the greatest *duty*, but the highest *privilege* of a *christian*. By this he is admitted to converse with the great Creator and Governor of the universe ; to  
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supplicate the divine protection, to implore him to vouchsafe the blessings he stands in need of; and to avert the miseries he either feels or fears. Nor are the effects of it confined to ourselves alone; a whole community may be benefited by it. Thus we read that the prayer of Elijah could open the treasures of rain, and revive a thirsty and *barren land where no water was.* By this Joshua procured the sun to stop in his course, till he had avenged himself of his enemies. By this David caused the destroying angel to sheathe the sword of vengeance; and the good king Hezekiah was indulged a longer life for the benefit of his people. In a word, by this it is, that we celebrate the attributes of the Almighty, confess his glory, reverence his majesty, implore his aid, or give thanks for his mercies. Sometimes it is an act of contrition, and directs us to a deep humiliation for our transgressions: at other times it is an act of praise, adoration and love, and calls forth all the powers of the soul to join in the holy raptures of zeal and devotion, whenever we contemplate the amazing mystery of our redemption, and the divine aids and assistances by which the holy spirit helps our infirmities.

ties. But still in order to render our prayers in so high a degree effectual; they must be the work of our hearts, and not the labour of our lips only: they must be fervent with *hope*, stedfast in *faith*, and joyful with *charity*. Prayer alone is but the body of devotion: it is these christian graces which lend it wings to waft it up to the throne of mercy. So that if our prayers be constant and regular, daily attending on the *outgoings of the morning and evening*; if they be animated with the fervent breathings of a heart enflamed with holy love; if they be actuated with an ardent gratitude for all that Christ did and suffered for us, and a sincere resolution to obey his will, then may we eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

The next duty which I shall offer to your meditation is *faith*. Now *faith*, as the Apostle says, is the *substance*, or foundation, of *things hoped for*, the *evidence of things not seen*\*: i. e. it gives us a sure confidence, or grounds to expect those things which we hope for, and makes us see *the things that are not, as though they were*. Thus, as the word

\* Heb. xi. 1.

*preached,*

preached, did not profit those that heard it, not being mixed with faith \* ; so the sacraments are but bare signs, and signify nothing, to them that believe not, or have not a lively faith. It is by the eye of faith alone, that we believe in and follow Christ, through every period of his divine oeconomy ; that we see the eternal word, him by whom God made the worlds, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and the Glory of Heaven lying in a manger ; that we worship him with the eastern sages, and follow him in his ministry as he went about continually doing good. By the same faith it is that we see him represented here in the outward signs of his Sacrament, and lift up our hearts above these visible elements, to those things which are spiritual and invisible ; beholding Christ's body lifted up on the cross, as the Israelites did the serpent in the wilderness, and by this sight, by *this faith we are healed.*

But then we must remember, that our faith must not rest in speculation only, or be a dead unactive faith ; but must be animated by our good works, and made manifest by

\* Heb. iv. 2.

our actions. Without these qualifications it is like salt which *bath lost its favour*, without the spirit and activity that gives a value to it: and indeed *faith* is to the Christian sacrament what *salt* was to the Jewish sacrifice, essentially necessary to the right celebration of it; for as *every sacrifice was to be seasoned with salt*, so every worthy communicant must be animated by faith. Hence we are assured, *he shall be saved by his faith*, who by his faith is more than conqueror; who by his faith overcometh the world, and removeth mountains, the mountains of vanity, ambition, and pride: whose faith casteth out devils, the devils of impure lusts and unlawful desires; whose faith opens the eyes of the sinner, and maketh him see the things that belong to his peace; and cureth the lame hypocrite, and maketh him walk uprightly. When these signs follow your faith, and these will naturally follow them that believe, then may you eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

The last particular I shall mention as the object of self-examination, is charity. *Above all things*, says the apostle, *have fervent charity among yourselves*. This, like the fire from heaven,

heaven, must enkindle the sacrifice, or God will never accept of it for an atonement. The table of the Lord must not be defiled with anger and malice, with revenge and hatred. The soul that would profitably join in this holy institution, and duly celebrate this feast of love, must be actuated by *the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated; full of mercy and of good works.* If we consider him who endured so much contradiction of sinners, who *when he was reviled; reviled not again; when he suffered all sorts of indignities that the most malicious wit could invent, or the most powerful rage could execute,* we shall find that he bore all with patience; and proved by his own example, what he hath directed us in his precept, the practicability of *blessing those that curse us, and praying for those that despitefully use us, and persecute us.* And as the sole end of his dying for us, was to reconcile us to God, so one great end of his instituting this sacrament, was to make it the means of reconciling us to one another.— Alas! what are all the petty injuries which our little peevish spirits are so hastily provoked by, in comparison of that despite and violence

lence which we daily commit against the spirit of God?—and yet he *is slow to anger, of great kindness*, and only requires that we should forgive our brother his trespasses, in order to have our much greater trespasses forgiven in heaven.—It is one happy effect of the frequent use of this holy sacrament, that it not only disposes us to an universal charity and forgiveness of our fellow creatures; but also, by there contemplating the unbounded and unchangeable love of our blessed Saviour, we are thence led to a more perfect and sincere reconciliation with one another, than any other method could produce in us; as we there seal and ratify those bonds of mutual love and amity, which he hath made the necessary condition of being admitted to this covenant of grace and mercy. Let therefore our love be boundless and universal; not narrow and confined like the beams of the sun, when they stream through a small chink, or are contracted into a glass: but diffusive and unlimited like the beams of the sun when it rides in its mid-day splendor, and when nothing is hid from the vital heat thereof. Possess yourselves therefore of this most excellent gift of charity, of this divine *love*, which

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must be without *diffimulation*, and then you may eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Thus have I laid before you some of the principal duties which, according as we have opportunity, should be taken into the account of self-examination, whenever we prepare to present our souls and bodies a living and acceptable sacrifice at the table of the Lord. More especially is it incumbent on those who have not yet made (and sorry I am, that there should be so many among us, who have not yet made) this solemn profession of their faith in the merits of their crucified Redeemer. And though a virtuous and good life be in general the best preparation for the performance of this, and every other religious duty; yet as the best of men have their infirmities, and may not always be upon their guard against the attacks of sin, it cannot be an unprofitable exercise for any one, sometimes to make a full stop in the journey of life, to review the road he has gone through, to mark where he hath deviated from the path of virtue, or been led astray by the allurements of pleasure, the hurry of passion, or the too common prevalency of example.

Let all of us then, my brethren, embrace the present opportunity of examining ourselves, that after a hearty detestation of our past sins, and forming a stedfast faith in the merits of Christ, an ardent and unreserved charity for our neighbours, and a firm resolution to live as those who profess the Gospel, we may receive this manna of the Lord, and feed ourselves unto eternal life. Let us always commemorate the infinite love of our merciful Redeemer, with the warmest gratitude; but remember also with a pious reverence, that he who has been our Saviour will one day be our judge. And God grant that we may so live, as if we were always mindful of that awful period; and so examine ourselves in this life, that we may happily escape condemnation in that which is to come,

## S E R M O N XXXIII.

MORAL VIRTUES THE GENUINE FRUITS  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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EPHES. V. 9.

*The fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.*

WHENEVER we contemplate the various instances of divine goodness that appear in the bountiful productions, and harmonious order of the *natural* world, we are ready enough to acknowledge, with the pious psalmist, that *the merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance.* We have the same reason, and every sincere christian will think it his duty, to reflect with equal gratitude, upon the wonderful works of God in the *moral* world.—The works of creation

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and redemption, of nature and grace, proceeding, as they do, from the same infinitely wise and good Being, afford so many similar proofs of divine benevolence ; are so fruitful in the supplies that our whole constitution stands in need of ; are so properly adapted to support our animal, and purify our spiritual nature ; that a serious examination, and a sober use of them, should at all times excite the warmest expressions of human gratitude.

¶ And yet, inestimable as these blessings are in themselves, and liberally as they are dispensed to the bodily and spiritual wants of man, we nevertheless too often see the bounties of nature abused, the offers of grace rejected, and the means that would enable us to grow in goodness, and to bring forth fruit unto holiness, mistaken and perverted ; either through wrong methods of cultivation, or a wilful neglect of right ones. Thus, if at any time an enthusiast should persuade himself that he has the gifts of the spirit, or a fanatic should counterfeit the fruits of it ; the scoffing unbeliever, who finds it an easy matter to detect the hypocrisy of the one, and to expose the self-delusion of the other, will

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be too apt to *shoot out his arrows* of ridicule at christianity in *general*; instead of aiming them at those only, who pretend to the *powers*, or assume the *characters*, of its inspired founders.

Hard fate of the christian religion! that the enlightening *spirit* of God, which was given to *guide* men *into all truth*, should by their abuse of it, be made an occasion of leading them *into falsehood*! But, if weak men deceive *themselves*, and artful men attempt to deceive *others*, no conclusion can thence be drawn against the wisdom and reality of a dispensation, which, even from the first effects produced by it, must appear to have been the fittest means of establishing the principles, and promoting the practice of true religion and moral virtue.

In order, therefore, to prevent any wrong notions of this subject, it may be proper to observe, that there is a material difference between such aids and assistances of the spirit, as were instantly dispensed to the first teachers of christianity, and such as were promised to all subsequent professors of it. Both indeed

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indeed are comprised by the sacred writers under the general term of the *gifts*, or *fruits of the spirit*: but they are plainly distinguished, both by the measure in which they were given, and by the effects they were intended to produce. Upon the apostles, they were poured out in a most ample measure, and *great grace was upon them all*. They spoke and taught *as the spirit gave them utterance*: they wrought miracles as the same spirit gave them *power*; these are properly styled *extraordinary gifts*; and it is hard to conceive how the two great ends, to which they were directed, could have been otherwise attained—the one to convince mankind of the truth of Christ's resurrection, which from the natural course of things was held *incredible*: and the other to gain them over to his pure and reasonable doctrines; which, considering their strong and inveterate habits of vice, must have appeared highly *improbable*. And yet, the immediate and sudden change in the temper and manners of the first converts to christianity, was no less extraordinary than the gifts themselves. For, as the works they saw, disposed them to believe the doctrines they heard; so their conviction, beginning

## S E R M O N XXXIII. 187

at the senses, passed on to the understanding, and had its full effect. Hence the boldest figures of speech are used to mark the happy change in the manners of those converts : being compared to passing from *darkness into light* ;—to being *dead with Christ*, and *quickened together with him* ;—to being *born again*,—*becoming a new man, and a new creature* : expressions, that well describe the powerful operations and fruits of the spirit at that time ; though perhaps very improperly assumed, and applied, by some late pretenders to an uncommon portion of its sacred influence.

In this manner did the *extraordinary* gifts of the spirit answer the ends for which they were dispensed in the first ages of christianity : and as we can now reason from the *effect* to the *cause*, we may justly conclude, that the *means*, by which divine wisdom saw fitting to *plant* our holy faith, were intended to be more powerful in their operations, more effectual in their nature, whilst the strongest gusts of malice and prejudice raged against it, than such as were necessary for its *support*, after it had taken deep root, and *stretched forth*

forth its branches unto the sea, and its boughs unto the river. For the sublime and saving truths of the gospel being committed to writing, and spread throughout the world ; that plant which our heavenly Father had planted, soon grew up to be, as it were, another *tree of life* ; of the fruit whereof, all men were free to *put forth their hand, and eat, and live for ever*. From that period, all extraordinary interpositions of divine power became less expedient. It was sufficient that the *ordinary* influence of the spirit should be to *religion*, what the *constant* providence of God is to *nature* : and if the present means of conviction are addressed to the *reason* and *understanding*, and not to the *senses* of mankind ; if christians now walk by faith, and not by sight ; we have nevertheless the comfort to be assured, that blessed are they who have *not* seen, and yet have believed,

Such being the *present* state of this gracious dispensation, the professors of pure and uncorrupted christianity, can neither stand in need of, nor will vainly pretend to, the exercise of any *miraculous* powers ;—though in the mean time we may be allowed to consider

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the preservation of the gospel as *one continued miracle*, being handed down to us through a long succession of ages without any material alteration; and hitherto verifying the promise of our Saviour to his disciples, that as he had chosen, and ordained them, *to bring forth fruit*, so their *fruit should remain*.

Now that the gifts of the spirit, in this qualified sense of disposing us to believe and act agreeably to the gospel, were to extend to all who should be baptized into the name of Christ, very plainly appears, both from repeated declarations in scripture, and the very nature of an institution that must for ever derive its chief support from the same grace and mercy on which it was founded. And, if the *ordinary* aids and assistance of the spirit be sufficient for all the purposes of virtue and true holiness; if it be ever helping our infirmities, and ever ready to be dispensed to all that seek it; we must allow that God hath made as ample a provision for our salvation and happiness, as was consistent with the liberty of reasonable and moral agents.

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It remains then to be considered, what are the effects, or fruits, whereby it may be known whether we duly cultivate, and concur with, this divine influence: for we may receive the grace of God *in vain*—we may *resist* the Holy Ghost—may *quench* the Spirit; may extinguish every spark of grace; till, instead of walking *as children of the light, the light that was in us becomes darkness*. Now the text before us, and many others of the like import, offers an infallible rule to judge by in this case. For *the fruit of the spirit*, says the apostle, *is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth*.—Real and substantial virtues, as these are, can neither be counterfeited nor mistaken. In the exercise of them, (and they are not virtues if they rest only in speculation,) all is clear and manifest both to the world and ourselves—there is nothing fallacious, nothing equivocal in them; since to practise them in their full extent, and upon true christian principles, men must often give up their ease, their interest, and many sensual gratifications; which *they* only are content to relinquish, whose faith can penetrate into the noble and exalted prospects of a better world.—We cannot therefore give a surer test

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test of religious sincerity, and that *the spirit of God dwelleth in us*, than by a steady and uniform regard to those virtues that are the very *essence* of religion. To have faith in God, and to believe that we are justified only through the merits of Christ, is indeed the *foundation* of our religion, but not the *whole* of it: and whether we thus believe or *not*, can only be known to God and our own hearts.—But, when from the purest and most disinterested motives, we *do good*, *hoping for nothing again*, and when we are *kind one to another*, *tender hearted*, *forgiving one another*.—*When we defraud no man*, *do violence to no man*, *but render to all their dues*.—*When putting away lying*, we *speak every man truth to his neighbour*, and *deceive him not*, though it be to our own hindrance; we then produce evidence from our works, and offer the fruits of the spirit, which are goodness, righteousness, and truth, in proof of the sincerity and efficacy of our faith.

We need not enter further into the *nature* of these virtues, and it would open too large a field, to describe the various *effects* of them. The very naming them suggests to the mind, all

all that is commendable and useful in the conduct of individuals ; all that is conducive to the happiness and good order of society. Even *love, joy, peace, long-sufferings gentleness, meekness, temperance*—together with *faith itself*, are all included in the idea of *goodness, righteousness, and truth*. And they are all called the *fruits of the spirit*, as being the natural and genuine effects of that sacred influence upon the will and affections ; which, if properly cultivated, would distinguish the *christian profession* by these virtues, as clearly as a good tree is known by its fruit.

And what can we esteem more worthy to be styled the fruits of God's holy spirit ; or what greater honour can humanity aspire after, than to have our nature restored to a capacity of producing *some portion* of those moral excellencies that constitute the great and amiable perfections of *God himself*? We may ask also, whether any satisfaction, any pleasure can equal *that* which the mind enjoys from a consciousness of its own rectitude, supported and assisted by divine grace ? Who but is pleased to find himself called a *good man*; to be esteemed a *just man*; to be trusted and

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and relied upon as a man of veracity and truth in all he reports, and all he promises?—These are excellencies in a character that stamp a dignity upon human nature; and in some degree restore it to its primitive perfection.—And, if we retain any traces of a state of innocence—if we have recovered any features of our original purity—any resemblance of that divine image after which we were created, to whom must we ascribe them, but to the spirit of God which worketh in us? and where are they to be found, if not in our goodness, and righteousness, and truth?

But *reason* pretends to claim them as her own proper fruits; and *all-sufficient philosophy*\*, admiring herself in the flattering mirror of *self-conceit*, beholds every thing in the *natural* powers of man, which the christian is directed to look for in *grace*.—That our nature is indued with a *capacity* for virtue is certain: and that moral goodness, and righteousness, and truth, are discoverable by the

\* On the subject of philosophy, see an opinion in the Critical Review, in the article of the Lord Bishop of London's Charge at his Visitation, 1794. Philosophy is here accurately defined, and justly appreciated.

*Right* of nature, is likewise certain: for they are antecedent to revelation, and written upon the heart, in a manner that *conscience* will never suffer to be obliterated. But to say that men are sufficient of *themselves*, that they have always the *ability*, always the *inclination* to practise *them*; is an assertion that every one, who looks into his own heart, and impartially examines what passes there, will find too much cause to contradict.

We do not, however, assume, that the divine influence of the Spirit was *withheld*, and no fruits of it produced, till, if we may so speak, the *sun of righteousness* arose to ripen, and bring them to perfection. The *benefits* of the Christian covenant, and especially that we are now considering, had their *secret operation* throughout all ages, and consequently, before the great *mystery of godliness* was *universally revealed*. Good men, we know, were truly sensible of the *comfort* of it under the *Jewish Dispensation*; and we may presume, that a sincere disposition to virtue was not unsupported by it, even in the *Gentile* world. Nay, one is almost inclined to think, that some of their best and wisest men had discovered

vered the fitness of it, and thence derived their hopes of being assisted by it. The well-known dialogue between the excellent Socrates and his pupil, of itself confirms this supposition \* : not to mention the popular opinions

\* The passage, to which the bishop here alludes, is, I conceive, the following :

*Ην μείοι, ὃσκερ αὐθρωπος θεραπευων γιγνωσκεις της αὐθεραπευειν εθελοντας, καὶ χαριζομενος της ανίχαριζομενης, καὶ συμβλευομενος καλαμαγδανεις της φρουριως δυτω και τῶν θεῶν τειραν λαμπάντης θεραπευων, εἴτε εοι θελησοντι τέρι τῶν αδηλων αυθρωποισι συμβιλευειν, γνωση το θεῖον, δτι τοστον και τοιετον εσιν, ὃσθ' ἀμα ταντα δρᾶν και ταντα ακηειν, και τανταχον ταρειναι, και ἀμα τανταν επιμελεῖσθαι αὐτις.*

Xenoph. Mem. ΚΕΦ. 8. Κομ. ιη. Oxonii. 1741.

Thus rendered by Mrs. S. Fielding. “ As therefore among men, we make best trial of the affection and gratitude of our neighbour, by shewing him kindness ; and discover his wisdom, by consulting him in our distress ;— do thou, in like manner, behave towards the Gods. And if thou wouldest experience what their wisdom, and what their love—render thyself deserving the communication of some of those divine secrets, which may not be penetrated by man ; and are imparted to those alone, who consult, who adore, who obey the Deity. Then shalt thou, my Aristodemus ! understand there is a being, whose eye pierceth throughout all nature ; and whose ear is open to every sound : extended to all place ; extending

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opinions which obtained among them, that the influence or spirit of the Deity pervaded all things; and that in him *they lived, and moved, and had their being*\*. But the natural

through all time; and whose bounty and care can know no other bounds, than those fixed by his own creation!"

Memoirs of Socrates, p. 65.

\* A&ts xvii. 28. Non mirum si Cilix Paulus Cilicem Aratum, vel in patriæ communis honorem, legerat. sic et vetus Iambicus, Ζωμεν δ'εν αυτῶν καὶ κινημεθα.—Sic. Virg. Georg. iv. 222.—“ Deum namque ire per omnes Terrasque, & factusque maris, cœlumque profundum.”

“ Principio cœlum ac terras, camposque liquentes,  
Lucentemque globum Lunæ, Titanaque astra  
*Spiritus* intus alet, totamque infusa per artus,  
Mens agitat molem, & magno se corpore miscet.”

A&n. vi. 724.

“ Juppiter est quodcunque vides, quo&unque moveris.”

Poli Synop. vol. iv. Comment. in Acta Apost.  
Cap. xvii. 28. Lucanus, lib. 2.

To which may be added, some further proofs of the popular opinion of the universal agency of the Holy Spirit, which obtained among the wisest and most learned heathens.

“ Hæc ita fieri, omnibus inter se continentibus mundi partibus, profecto non possent, nisi et uno, & divino continuato SPIRITU continerentur.”

Cic. De Nat. D. ii. p. 60.  
“ These

tural men, of this age, perceive not the things of God; for they are *spiritually* discerned. And yet such is the inconsistency, and such

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“ These things truly (says Balbus) could not, all the parts of the universe so conspiring together, be so performed, if they were not kept together by one divine and continued Spirit.”

“ Prope est à te Deus, tecum est, intus est, ita dico, Lucili, *sacer* intra nos *spiritus* sedet; malorumque bonorumque nostrorum observator, & hic prout à nobis tractatus est, ita nos ipse tractat; bonus vir sine Deo non est.”

Sen. Ep. 41.

“ God (says Seneca) is nigh to thee, he is with thee, he is in thee; I tell thee, Lucilius, a *holy spirit* resideth within us, an observer of our good and bad actions; who deals with us, according as we have dealt with him. There is no good man (or, no man is good) without God.”

And the Father of the Stoicks thus defines the Deity—

Θεος εσι πνευμα δικηκον δι' ολα τα κοσμα. Zeno.

Posidonius also gives a similar but ampler definition of the all-pervading Spirit.

“ God is an intelligent and fiery *spirit*, not having shape, but transforming and assimilating himself as he pleases, to all things.”

Θεος εσι πνευμα νοερον και πυρωδες υπερ εχον μαρφτη, μελαγχλον δέ εις ὁ βιβλεται, και εξομοιωμενον πάσιν.

Posid. apud Stob.

the prejudices of these advocates for the sufficiency of reason, that they will sooner allow *Socrates* to have been directed in many cases by his good genius \*; than a faithful christian,

For a satisfactory exposition of the sublime passages of Virgil above quoted, the critical reader should consult the ingenious Bishop Berkley's Siris, p. 133, from which the learned Dr. Warton has given a long extract in his notes on the Æneid.

\* There are various opinions concerning the dæmon, or good genius of Socrates, and what it really was, is not yet fully determined: "sub judice lis et."

"*Esse divinum quiddam,*" (inquit Cicero in libro de divinatione) "*quod Socrates dæmonion appellat, cui semper ipse paruerit, nunquam impellenti, saepe revocanti.*"

The most remarkable instance of the interposition of this genius, is that recorded by Plutarch in the life of Alcibiades. It is said, that after the defeat of the Athenians, at the battle of Delium, Socrates told Alcibiades, and those who were with him, "That he had just received intimations from his genius, that they should not take the same road the greater part of their broken forces had taken, but turn into some other." By which means those who paid regard to his admonitions escaped; while the rest, being overtaken by a party of the enemy's horse, were either killed on the spot, or made prisoners.

Still, however, it is thought, by some, that Socrates's genius was nothing more than sound judgment or prudence. Cornelius calls *prudence*, a kind of *divination*.

Agree-

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christian, to receive any support from the help which cometh from above.

*How this help is derived to us; or, in what manner the spirit of God may be said to operate on the human mind, are questions which modest reason will not ask: nor was it expedient that revelation should instruct us to resolve them. The direction of spiritual powers is among the secret things that belong to him, whose ways are in the sea, and his paths in the great waters, and whose footsteps are not*

Agreeably to which Juvenal says, “ Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia.”—Lib. iv. Sat. 10, 305.

It must, nevertheless, be confessed, that Socrates appears to have thought otherwise, from the manner in which he frequently mentions his tutelar genius. And that he was not singular in entertaining such a notion, appears from the following lines of Menander—

Απαντί Δαιμων ανδρι συμπαρασατεῖ  
Εύεις γενομενα, μυσαγωγῷ τῷ βίῳ  
Αγαθῷ. —

Upon the whole, it is far from improbable, that Socrates might adopt the prevalent notion of the heathens, who from a corruption of primæval tradition, or perhaps sacred history, generally believed the Genii, or Guardian Angels, to be employed in taking care of mankind and

*not known.* Like the *wind*, to which our Saviour compares them, their motions are invisible to the eye; and only discernible in their effects. Let it therefore be our earnest endeavour to make them known by their effects—by our *faith* and *virtue*: by our *godliness*, *righteousness*, and *truth*—by pursuing *whatsoever things are lovely and of good report* among men: and approving whatever is *good and acceptable unto God*: by an exemplary attendance on his worship, a serious attention to his word, and a devout participa-

their concerns. Such an opinion seems to have been prevalent among the most ancient nations of the world, both Heathens and Jews, and is corroborated by the authority of the holy scriptures: of this the most authentic and incontrovertible proofs may be seen by consulting the following authorities. S. Basil, S. Athanasius, and Methodius; and also S. Agustini. apud Sixt. Senens. l. v. annot. 8. Vid. *acta concil. Nicen.* ii. act 5. Vid. M. Antonin. *meditat.* l. ii. §. 15. l. 5. §. 19, &c. Porphyri. in *vita Plotini.* Diog. Laert. in *Zenon.* Segm. 88. lib. 7. p. 418. vol. i. Meibonii. apud Henricum Wetsteinum. Amstel. 1692. Plutarch in *Antonio*, p. 930. *Compendium theolog.* Moham. c. 13. apud Reland. *de rel. Mohammed.* Vide etiam Josephum, Phil. Jud. Origen. Tertull. &c. And for sacred authorities consult Dan. xii. 1. Tobit xiii. 15. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6, Rev. iv. 5.—v. 11.—viii. 2, &c.

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tion of that holy Sacrament, which our merciful Redeemer was pleased to institute, both as the *means* of grace, and the *surest* pledge of our love to *him*, and to *one another*. These are the only *signs* that can now be shewn by *them that believe*. To *seek* after any other is folly: to pretend to *give* any other is presumption. For so is the will of God, that with *well-doing* we should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: and, if our conversation be such as becometh the gospel; if we *love God and keep his commandments*—if we walk *worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called*, with all *lowliness and meekness*, forbearing one another *in love*, and endeavouring to *keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*; we shall then give the most incontestible proofs that we *walk in the spirit*; and that the *fruits of our spirit* are goodness, and righteousness, and truth.

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## SERMON XXXIV.

## ON BROTHERLY LOVE.

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HEB. XIII. 1.

*Let brotherly love continue.*

IN the preceding part of this epistle is given a succinct and comparative view of the Mosaic and Christian Dispensations. And the Apostle having, in this chapter, drawn the whole of his argument to one point, by shewing that the ceremonial law, which was *only a shadow of better things to come*, was now to give way to a more perfect and reasonable service, he proceeds towards the close of it to confirm the Hebrew converts in the faith they had embraced, and in the practice of those virtues that would adorn their profession of it.—Virtues, which were not like those of the narrow-minded Jews, to be pent up

up within the scanty limits of their own pale; but which, after the example of the merciful Author of the christian religion, were to have the happiness of mankind in general for their object.

That a principle of universal benevolence forms the distinguishing character of the Gospel Dispensation, appears from the whole tenor of it; but, at the time when the apostle wrote, it was new to the world; was little known, and less practised. Even the social affections were partial, confined, and limited.—Nations the most polished, was the most proud and haughty. If civility and kind offices were shewn to fellow-citizens, the distresses of strangers were treated with a cold indifference and contempt. Hence the Jews from the pride of being God's chosen people,—the Greeks from the vanity of human learning, and the Romans from the insolence of uncontrollable power, not only considered the rest of mankind as barbarians, but were too apt to treat them as such.

It was to these very Jews, Greeks, and Romans, that St. Paul addressed all his Epistles;

ties; in which his constant method is, first to instruct them in the merciful and gracious conditions of the christian covenant; and then to enforce the social duties that naturally result from it. Hence those frequent exhortations to be *kindly affectioned one to another*—*to consider one another*; *to provoke unto love and to good works*: *to do good unto all men*, but especially *them that are of the household of faith*: *to be mindful to entertain strangers*—*to remember them that suffer adversity*; and, as it is in the text, *to let brotherly love continue*.

These certainly are rules of right conduct that apply to every reasonable, as well as religious, mind; and were not more necessary to the support and advancement of christianity in its infant state, when it had to struggle with *principalities and powers*; than to maintain its benevolent and social character in every subsequent period.

But there are certain occasions which give peculiar propriety to the apostle's advice, *to let brotherly love continue*.—The present is such an occasion; and in order to make a right

right use of it, now we have assembled ourselves together in this holy place, I shall briefly point out the social and religious obligations we are under as men and christians, to consider the pitiable case of these poor children, and what proper objects they are of our love and good works.

In treating this subject, I need not enter into a detail of the great and important ends for which societies in general were constituted. It is sufficient to observe that, even in their rudest form, an honest attention, to whatever might best promote the mutual interests of the members, must have been a fundamental principle. The strong would consider themselves as bound to support and protect the weak: the weak to look up to and respect the strong: so that the tender chords of sympathy, interwoven in the human frame, if not obstructed by selfish motives, would always vibrate to each other, and dispose them *to suffer or rejoice together*. In this case, their common nature would have its common feelings; and the cry of distress, which is a kind of universal language, would be as intelligible to the wild inhabi-

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tant of the desert, as to the citizen whose manners are polished by the most refined sentiments.

But in large communities of men, the natural sense which is strengthened by the social, is yet further enforced from considerations which may be traced from the powers and capacities of our nature, up to the supreme will of the gracious author of our nature; who, by forming us with strong propensities to social engagements, hath plainly intended that much of our present happiness, much also of the future, should depend upon a right discharge of the obligations resulting from them.

Besides, our best interests are often so complicated, that they cannot otherwise be secured, than by a reciprocal exchange of kind attentions, and benevolent offices; according to the power and ability we may respectively possess: which, though infinitely varied in point of rank, situation, and riches, are comparatively important to the general good order and happiness of the community. For the social, like the human body, *is not one member but*

*but many : and even those members, as the apostle elsewhere observes, which are more feeble, and less comely, are not the less necessary ; being all so tempered together, as to have the same care, and to be equally useful one to another. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee ; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you \*.*

Agreeably to this analogy, our love and attention must not be confined to the narrow circle of friendship or affinity.—Social benevolence widens and extends itself to an infinite number of good offices, by which the several ranks and orders are benefited, and connected with each other. Neither the natural nor the social system admit of a parity of condition. In both, there must be subordination and distinction. In the heavens one star differeth from another star in glory ; on earth one man differeth from another man in riches or power ; but as riches which procure rank and power, are, in commercial states especially, chiefly gathered from the ingenuity, and patient industry of the lower classes of men ; so whenever that ingenuity and in-

\* 1 Cor. xii. 21.

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dustry are in danger of being diminished, either through the ignorance, the idleness, the casual misfortunes, or profligate manners of the people; in this case, is it not the *interest* as well as *duty* of the great, to consider and look well to the poor and needy part of the rising generation? to contribute something of their abundance to ease the sore burthen of a numerous and perhaps neglected offspring, and especially, to see them well rooted in religious principles, that the *sons may grow up, as young plants, and the daughters be as the polished corners of the temple.* For,

The powers of the infant mind, like those young plants to which the psalmist compares them, will have their growth some way or other, and therefore every thing depends upon a proper culture. Happy if the skilful hand of discipline and instruction be timely applied to train them into order; to bend and subdue the stubborn shoots of passion—to prune away the luxuriant branches of bad desires—to preserve the good ones from the canker of evil example, and to graft upon them the lovely fruits of piety to God, loyalty to the king, and love of their country.—Were we

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thus to extend our brotherly care, to those especially who have most need of it, both the rich and poor would be prepared to enter into active life with dispositions and abilities to promote the public welfare, and each individual contributing something to the common stock of order and happiness, by his labour, his diligence, his ingenuity, his submission to law, and respect to authority; the whole would constitute one great amount of national strength, and national safety.

And to what nobler purpose can power and riches be applied? or what fairer testimony can we give of our charity and good works, than by taking the children of the poor, the stranger, and the fatherless under our protection? If we cannot always restrain the progress of licentiousness and disorder by legal punishment; let us endeavour, at least, to prevent the growth of them by an early and virtuous education. By so doing we shall not only enjoy the consciousness of having done our duty; but by bestowing some of our goods to feed and instruct the infant-poor, we may hope, in time, to lessen the number of bad people; and enhance the value of our other posses-

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possessions, by the greater security with which we may enjoy them.

It appears, then, from this short and imperfect view of the subject, that some motives to brotherly love are founded in the natural relation we bear to each other as men; that others arise from an attention to our common safety as members of society; without insisting on those that spring from a generous desire to do good, even for the sake of doing it.—But the most powerful and affecting motives are laid in the sanctions of religion; all tending to inspire us with those compassionate feelings that divine philanthropy, that heavenly temper of mind, which the gospel every where recommends to us; and which the text expresseth by *brotherly love.*

Of this we have a most affecting description in that passage wherein our divine Master is pleased to consider the various acts of charity conferred upon others, as done to himself.—*I was an hungered, says he, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked,*

*and ye clothed me; sick, and ye visited me; in prison, and ye ministered unto me.* I need not mention the woe denounced against those who pretended to be ignorant of such distressful cases; nor need I further explain to you, my brethren, the nature of that love, of which you are about to give repeated and unquestionable proofs by your good works. The one is a natural consequence of the other. Even our *faith* which *worketh by love*, cannot be perfected without *good works*. Well therefore hath our Lord and Saviour made that the distinguishing principle of his religion, which he knew would ever be the best support of it—for *bereby shall all men know that we are his disciples if we have love one to another.*

How powerfully this divine principle operated in the first ages of christianity is well known. It was so far the support and comfort of its professors of all ranks, that an apostate and persecuting emperor \*, struck with the force of such an amiable conduct, could not help crying out, as if to reproach

\* Julian.

his pagan subjects—“ See, how these christians love one another.”

If the complexion of the present times be of a darker cast ; if a *cloud* of discontent in the western hemisphere, at first *no bigger than a man's hand*, hath unexpectedly blown up a tempest of war and discord ; and if the temper of fellow-christians, and fellow-subjects, embroiled by political differences, seem but ill-disposed to let brotherly love continue, if such be the infelicity of the times, to what shall we impute it ? not to the weakness of the benevolent principle we have been considering, nor to the want of it ; but to a temporary, and occasional suppression of it. Discordant opinions, eager competitions, and clashing interests, like the violent concussion of hard and massy bodies, will, for a time, drive every softer substance from between them ; and drown the peaceable voice of religion : until he, who *maketh wars to cease in all the world*, shall speak *peace unto his people*, and bid them *be still*.

In the mean while, how much soever the merciful spirit of christianity may be sus-

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pended in this instance, yet our *charity* never faileth, but shineth more and more unto a perfect day. Indeed its influence is so extensive, and it forms such a prevailing colour in our national character, that one can hardly enumerate the several charitable institutions that have lately been formed in these united cities; or point out any one malady or distress but which they are destined to relieve. Hence the utmost efforts of human skill are generously exerted, *to heal every sickness and every disease among the people*\*. Hence also deserted children are taken in and provided for—the poor youth of both sexes maintained and educated—the debts of the industrious artificer discharged—the manners of the repenting prostitute corrected—women in the peril of child-birth delivered,—the havock formerly made by a contagious distemper prevented: and all treated with such compassionate attention, such skilful assiduity, as if the only contention amongst us was, (and would to God it were the only one,) who should be most *zealous of good works*.

\* Matt. iv. 23.

But

But amidst the various labours of love that I have barely mentioned, we must, on the present occasion, particularly distinguish that truly patriotic charity, which makes this annual appeal to your beneficence, and which, you will allow me to hope, will not now be made in vain.

I call it a *patriotic charity*, because the first idea of it seems to have sprung from a love of country; and that natural attachment to whatever relates to it; for which the genuine descendants of the Ancient Britons have ever been remarkable. A laudable affection in all people; which no distance of time or place should weaken; no difference of rank or station should ever dissolve. Happily the original founders of this charity felt its full force, nor have the succeeding trustees and contributors been less strongly impressed by it. They saw many of their industrious countrymen, whom views of profit and better employment had drawn to these parts, disappointed and distressed. They found children unhappily deprived of their parents; or parents more unhappy in being unable to support their children—all far from their native home,

strangers and foreigners, liable to be treated as vagrants—without friends, without settlements, without a place where to lay their heads.

Although the destitute condition of those poor children was overlooked by many, it did not pass unnoticed nor unrelieved by some worthy gentlemen of the principality, who were not ashamed to consider them as brethren—poor indeed, and depressed with present want, but descended perhaps from ancestors who had seen better days. Be that as it may, they were known to be the offspring of the same loyal and high spirited people.—Some perhaps of their own name, others of their own neighbourhood, and all speaking their own ancient language, which may boast of preserving its original purity beyond that of any living language in the world \*.

To

\* Of the remarkable purity of the Welch language, an ingenious and learned author thus writes.

"Perhaps no European language now in being, hath undergone less change than that of the old Britons, called the Welch; which is plainly owing to their having little or

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To relieve such poor children from present and future misery was surely an act of *true patriotism*, and the plan of relief was a *wise* one. It provided lodging, and food, and raiment for the body ; instruction and discipline for the mind : and although the objects taken

no communication with other nations, and but few authors. Pezon affirmeth further, “ That the language of the Titans, which is that of the Gauls, is after a revolution of above 4000 years preserved even to our time ; a strange thing, that so ancient a language should now be spoken by the \* Armorick Britons of France, and by the ancient Britons of Wales. These are the people who have the honour to preserve the language of the posterity of Gomer, Japhet’s eldest son, and the nephew of Shem.” Men therefore who would destroy this famous language, by discouraging the use of Welch bibles, surely must be thought never to have looked beyond their own windows, never to have experienced the least sensation of that pleasure and conviction, which result from inquiries into real antiquity.”

Introduction to languages, by Anselm Bayley, LL. B.

\* The ARMORIC is a dialect of the Welch, and sister to the Cornish language. Julian Manoir, a Jesuit, a few years ago, published an ARMORIC Grammar and Vocabulary, in French, which has been translated into English by Mr. Williams, and published with notes by Mr. Lluyd. In Archæol. tit. iii, and iv. p. 180, &c. Before him, Yvon Quillivere had published an ARMORIC Vocabulary, at Paris, 1521.

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In by the first benevolent subscribers were not many; yet others, seeing the effect of their good works, soon enlarged their ability to admit more.

But whatever their supplies have been from private benefactions, or from the handsome collections on this anniversary festival, they esteem themselves particularly happy in the annual bounty of their most amiable prince; whose virtues do no less honour to his title, than he receives from it;—nevertheless you will easily conceive, that the charge of supporting this charitable institution, and all similar ones, has gradually increased with the increasing price of provisions.—Not that the governors complain that their house is filled, for *yet there is room*: and if it be not furnished with guests, it is not for want of proper objects; for many poor children of the principality *they have always* waiting for admission; but means competent to their education and maintenance *they have not always*. From your charitable disposition they hope to be supplied with those means. Let not then a burthen be laid on the generous Society of Ancient Britons beyond what they

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are able to bear. Consider, I beseech you, that brotherly love is not a duty of one set of men, but of christians in general. For, were charity confined, either in the exercise, or the objects of it, to one country, sect, or party, it would not be *christian charity*. Its cheering beams, like those of the sun, must be shed *on all; on the evil and on the good; on the just and on the unjust, and nothing must be bid from the beat thereof.* As far therefore as the public has been benefited by the care and expence, bestowed by the governors on this particular institution, so far they may humbly hope to partake of the public benevolence.

And who that considers how many distressed Welch children, of both sexes, have been rescued from death; or from a life of ignorance and wretchedness worse than death; but must applaud the humanity of the first and all succeeding contributors, and be willing to strengthen their hands in this *labour of love?* — Who that beholds the decent, healthy, and orderly appearance of the children now present, but must conceive the most favourable hopes of their future conduct? or who that

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that is told of the progress their predecessors have made in religious and useful knowledge, how many have been placed in domestic services, or apprenticed to laborious trades, or sent down to the sea in ships, the proper element for the hardy youth of this country—Who, I say, that reflects upon all this, but must congratulate the public on so many useful members being gained to society, instead of leaving them to be a pest and nuisance to it?

But I will not longer detain you by pleading the cause of these poor children; your own discernment will readily perceive their wants. Your compassion will as naturally feel them; and your gratitude for the divine bounty to yourselves will be a sufficient motive to supply them. For how can we better express our sense of the goodness of God to us, than by doing good to others? Is there any amongst us who does not think himself happy that he was not born to poverty and want; that his own offspring was not forlorn and destitute as these poor objects were? but is it enough for us to thank God that we are not as other men, or even as these children;

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dren; without contributing something of our abundance to better their condition? Shall we withhold good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of our hand to give it\*? God forbid! Let them therefore that are rich be ready to give, and glad to distribute †: and let them that have but little, do their diligence gladly to give of that little. So will the blessing of them that were ready to perish come upon us; and so shall our prayers and our alms which we now join together, go up as a memorial before God, and bring an angel down to succour us, at that awful hour when neither riches will profit, nor power protect us, except we shall have been rich towards God, and excited one another to brotherly love, and to good works.

\* Prov. iii. 27.

† 1 Tim. vi. 18.

S E R

THE HISTORY OF NARROW

THE GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND  
Till the reign of King Edward VI. King Edward  
was the son of King Henry VIII. King Henry  
had a son named Edward, who was born at  
Windsor Castle, and he was educated in the  
University of Oxford. King Henry had  
five daughters, and his son Edward was the  
youngest. King Henry died in 1547, and Edward  
became King of England. King Edward was  
very young when he became King, and he  
died in 1553, when he was only fifteen years old.

King Edward was succeeded by his half-brother  
Henry, who was called King Henry VI. King Henry  
was a good man, and he did many good things  
for his country. He was very popular, and  
he died in 1558, when he was only thirty-five years old.

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**SERMON XXXV.****ON MEDITATION.****GEN. xxiv. 63.**

*And Isaac went out to meditate in the field, at the even-tide.*

IN the early age of the world, before the all-wise Creator was pleased to publish any general revelation of his will, good and pious men are said to have *walked with God*; observing such a moral rectitude in all their actions, as was most pleasing to a being of his high perfections; and performing such acts of adoration and worship, as were most expressive of his supremacy, and their dependence. In after times also, the conduct of mankind in extraordinary cases, appears to have been regulated, either by the express direction of the Deity himself, or the intermediate

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diate offices of his holy angels: so that every great and important event, such as the migration of families, the peopling uninhabited parts of the earth; the immediate preservation of the *innocent*, and destruction of the *guilty*, taking place in consequence of the divine appointment, would naturally impress upon the minds of men an *awful reverence* of his power, and an *unreserved obedience* to his authority. But though these instances of the power and majesty of God, served to make him appear *awful*; there were others of his *goodness* and *benovolence*, daily before their eyes, which could not but render him *amiable* to them: such were the gracious dispensations of Providence in storing the earth with a plentiful variety of vegetable food for the sustenance of *animal* nature in general; and the beautiful appearance, and harmonious order of the visible world, which yielded so much delight, and satisfaction to *man* in particular. Whatever therefore was the original of their public form of worship, of *building altars to the Lord*, and offering their sacrifices thereon; yet the performance of other devotional exercises, such as meditation on the glorious perfections of the Deity, thanksgiving

ing for his goodness, and prayer for his protection, may be supposed to be prior to any instituted form of worship, as they seem to be founded in the very constitution of things; and to be the natural overflowings of a good and grateful heart. For we can hardly conceive how a creature like man, who had attained to the use of his reasoning and reflecting powers, could remain long unaffected with that beautiful design and contrivance, displayed in the *frame* of the material world; and that bounty and munificence which are dispensed in its *productions*. So that, though the custom of sacrificing might be religiously observed in the primitive ages of the world, on great and solemn occasions; yet their daily and obvious reflections upon the works of the creation, the grand and magnificent disposition of its parts, and the beauty as well as usefulness of its several flowers, fruits and seeds; would make *these* devotional exercises of the mind, as regular as the *outgoings of the morning and the evening*, which praise him who made *the sun to shine, and the moon to give her light.*

And, that this was really the practice of good and virtuous men, in the first ages of the world, may be gathered from what is related in the text, of the patriarch Isaac : for he *went out to meditate in the field at the even-tide*.—He withdrew from all public intercourse and observation, to devote the remainder of the day to retirement, and the undisturbed application of his spiritual faculties. The *field* was the *scene* of his meditation, and therefore we may suppose *nature*, and the God of nature, to be the *subject*: and he chose the stillness and serenity of the *evening*, as most apt to compose, and collect his thoughts, which had been dissipated upon the business of the day; when the mild lustre of the setting sun; the beautiful refraction of its rays upon the clouds; the fragrance and fertility of the fields; the natural melody of the birds; the bleatings of his flocks and herds, (the innocent wealth of the primeval world) together with an infinite variety of other affecting images, could not fail to suggest such meditations, as would not only heighten the sense of his own happiness, but also furnish him with ample matter of *praise and thanksgiving* to the gracious author of it.

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Such, however, seems to have been the *evening* employment of the good and pious patriarch : and it would be very easy to shew, that both the subject, and the time of his meditation, have been the choice of the wisest and best men in all ages. The royal psalmist is never more inspired, than when he celebrates the great and beautiful appearances of the natural world ; except when he passes from the works of the *creation*, to meditate on the divine mercy and goodness displayed in the *redemption* of the world. And Solomon, his son, to whom the Almighty had given the *spirit of wisdom and understanding*, directed the application of it, to search out the uses and qualities both of animal and vegetable nature ; for we are told, that *he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall ; he spake also of beasts and of fowls, of creeping things and of fishes* \*. — Nay, a greater than Solomon, our blessed Saviour himself, was pleased to draw many of his instructions from such objects of nature as were most in view ; from the seed time or harvest, from sheepfold or vineyard ; from the fowls of the

\* 1 Kings iv. 33.

air, or the lilies of the field ; and, when he had finished the work of the day in acts of the highest benevolence, in *doing* and *teaching* all manner of good ; would sometimes withdraw from the following multitudes to a mountain apart ; there to meditate on the great and important ends of his mission ; which were to reform, and redeem a sinful world ; so that, as the evangelist records of him, *When the evening was come he was there alone.*

From these great examples I would willingly urge the obligation all men are under, frequently to devote their hours of leisure, and retirement, (if we can happily bring ourselves to bear retirement) to meditations of this sort : for, certainly, to devote our evening hours to contemplations on these operations of Providence, is to devote them to innocence, and the pursuit of virtue and knowledge.—I would not draw any invidious comparison between the rational amusements of this sort, and the captivating elegance, and luxurious refinements of our modern evening entertainments. But I cannot help observing, that there seems to be too strong a resemblance between these, and what the prophet

phet charges upon the degenerate people of Jerusalem in his time: and God grant the denunciation may not be equally applicable! \* *Wo unto them, says he, that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, may largely indulge themselves in every sensual enjoyment, and continue until night, till wine enflame them: and the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their entertainments; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his bands.* Would you stand clear of this charge? Prefer then the virtuous amusements recommended by the example of the wisest and best of men. Sequester yourselves from the deceitful ways of the world, from the prevalence of fashion, and the persuasion of example; by this you will find your nature, for the time, at least, restored to its primitive purity. The fields and groves will be, as it were, the garden of the Lord; wherein like the pious men of ancient times, you will seem to walk with God; conversing with him in his works, and giving him praise for the operations of his bands.

\* If. v. 11, 15.

But, as there is something more required of reasonable and accountable beings than bare ideal contemplation, which may indeed warm the imagination, and yet not improve the heart; let us first attend to those obvious conclusions which arise from our general observations on the great and beautiful appearance of the natural world, and then draw such reflections as may help to advance the moral beauty and rectitude of our own conduct.

First, then, it may be observed, that as man is the only creature who is capable of enjoying that rational delight, which arises from a contemplation of the great and beautiful appearance of the visible parts of the creation, so he certainly is the only one that can express his gratitude to God for it, and declare *the wonders that he doth for the children of men.* For though the very inanimate parts of the universe, the earth and the heavens, the elements and the seasons; *mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars\**, are, in the Holy Scripture, called upon to *praise the name of the Lord*; yet this can only be meant to raise the mind of man, to think and me-

\* Ps. cxlviii. 9.

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ditate on these distinguished objects, and to excite and animate him to apply the powers of his reason and understanding, to search into the excellent uses, and admirable qualities of these visible appearances; that from thence he may be led to praise, and adore that allmighty power and wisdom, whose hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and whose right hand hath spanned the heavens; *who stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain, and satisfieth the earth with the fruit of his works.*— Hence it is, that this world in which we dwell, and the arch of heaven that surrounds us on every side, is said to be the *Temple* of the Lord, wherein man, the only rational inhabitant, is invested, as it were, with a sacred character, to offer unto God the *praises due unto his holy name, and to tell of his works with gladness.*

It was from contemplating the wise design and contrivance which are so visible in the several parts of the creation, (how just and necessary the relation is between the whole and its parts; and how even the smallest animal, or the lowest shrub, was not formed in vain) that the wiser heathens reasoned themselves

into a belief of one supreme, and first cause of all things ; by whose *infinite wisdom*, the frame of the universe was first *designed*, and by whose *almighty power* and goodness, it was *disposed* and preserved in the beautiful order, and fruitful state, in which it still subsists. Thus one of the greatest among them, who thought the most, and reasoned the best, upon the divine nature ; declares, that “ the “ harmony and order, so conspicuous in the “ direction of the celestial orbs, and in the “ disposition of the earthly system, was to “ him a powerful argument, not only of the “ *existence* of some allwise and eternal Being, “ but also of the *right* he had to claim our “ *praise and adoration.*” And indeed the vulgar and more *idolatrous* part of the heathen world, seem to have adopted their multiplicity of gods, rather from a notion, that every single production of nature, such as their *fruits and herbage*, their *groves and fountains*, were each of them the effect of its particular deity ; than that the various blessings of nature were all produced by *chance*, and directed by *destiny*. But we find the great apostle endeavouring to correct this mistaken notion in the idolatrous Lycaonians, by telling them,

them, that it was one and the same God, *who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein*; and who also *gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness*\*. The same apostle elsewhere passes a very just reproach upon the generality of the two politest nations of the world, the *Greeks* and *Romans*, for their gross and wilful ignorance of the divine nature; whose invisible perfections, as he says, even his eternal power and godhead, might be clearly seen from his works in the visible world: so that their idolatry, as well as their impiety, were without excuse.

Should it not seem then, that to contemplate the manifold works of the almighty Creator, is a duty of natural obligation? and that to meditate on that wonderful providence by which they still subsist; and on that order and harmony in which they perform the several parts assigned them, has a direct tendency to our moral improvement? for it not only leads to a firm belief of the existence of God, but produces that love and

\* Acts xiv. 17.

adoration which are due to him, in return for the continual bounty and protection we receive from him; so that it must argue the basest ingratitude, not to *praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men* \*. Consider, also, that the human mind is endowed with suitable capacities for this very purpose. It is not only whilst the objects are presented to our sensitive faculties, that we see and perceive them: the powers of thought and reflection can again bring them back to our attention, and subject them to our meditation. Here then is the distinguishing character of rational beings; as also a proof that the gracious author of our nature designed *all* mankind for some degree of contemplation; and the considerable improvements that have of late years been made in natural knowledge, would lead us to conclude, that the divine assistance will always be dispensed, in proportion as men consider and regard the operation of his hands.—There are, indeed, some deep researches into the works of nature which call for more leisure, and greater abilities, than the generality of mankind are possessed

\* Psalm cxvii. 8.

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of; but the more conspicuous parts of the world, the great outlines of the creation, as they may be called, cannot fail to strike every imagination with a pleasing conviction of the power, and wisdom, and goodness of God ; especially, if we avail ourselves of the light reflected upon them from the inspired pages of holy writ : for such is the relation between the *works* and the *word* of God, that they mutually explain and illustrate each other ; and the sublimity of the language is so properly adapted to the dignity of the subject, as to afford us one proof among many, that both proceed from the same divine Author.

Thus when we survey the face of the earth as diversified into its great and marvellous appearances ; when we behold *the everlasting hills* as settled upon their firm and solid base : the scriptures teach us that these are the handywork of that almighty being who hath weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance ; in whose sight *the nations are as the light dust upon the beam*, and *who taketh up the isles as a very little thing*. When also we view the capacious chambers of the ocean, *the waves whereof rage and swell* ;

*swell*; we may thence learn the immensity of the great Creator, *who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand*; who hath *shut up the sea with doors*; and said, *hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed*. If from thence we lift up our eyes unto heaven, and survey the celestial orbs, where though *one star differs from another star in glory*, yet all preserve their natural order and harmony; and appear to be circumscribed within their bounds which they cannot pass; we there perceive, *that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work*. When we there also contemplate the greater luminaries, *the sun which rules the day, and the moon that governs the night*; when we consider them as shedding their kindly influences on both animal and vegetable life; attracting the vapour from the earth and sea; suspending it in the air, till it is purified from its groffer particles, and then returning it back to *water the earth*, by a method of distillation, impracticable to human powers, we shall hence be taught to acknowledge, that this and every *good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights*, whose invariable and diffusive

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goodness daily causeth his sun to shine on the evil and on the good ; whereas, should he, for our offences, withhold its salutary warmth, but for a few days, the powers of vegetation would be totally destroyed, and animal nature not only overwhelmed in a most horrible dread, but the warm vital motion within us would be stopped in its course. Indeed the whole frame of this world would be in danger of falling back into that formless, void state, when *darkness moved upon the face of the deep* ; before the creative spirit said, *let there be light, and there was light.* — But the Lord hath not forgotten to be gracious, and his tender mercies are still over all his works. While the earth remaineth, day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest shall not cease \*.

And this reminds us of that interesting subject of meditation displayed to us in the rich and bountiful provision, which the present season hath poured in upon us ; and which cannot but affect the imagination in the most pleasing manner, when like the patriarch we walk out to meditate in the fields at the even-tide. For there a good and considerate mind

\* Gen. viii. 22.

will reap as much delight from the beautiful *appearance* of this rich and fruitful scene, as the most sensual epicure can from the *enjoyment* of it. The pleasure of the contemplation may indeed be enhanced by the plenteous prospect which lays open to him ; but then this plenty is not to be considered as appropriated to self alone ; but as diffused by the communicative goodness of God to animal life in general ; from man the *biggest*, down to those scarce visible creatures which form the *lowest link* in the chain of being. For the same bountiful God who gave every *moving thing that liveth to be meat* for us, hath also given *grass for the cattle, and feedeth the young ravens that call upon him* \*. Nay one might almost venture to affirm, that, most of the animal kind which fall under our observation, have a claim to the productions of the earth, even prior to that of man who lords it over them.—It is a command in the Mosaic law, founded in equity and benevolence, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn* † : and the observation of the wise man flows

\* Psalm cxlvii. 9. Job xxxviii. 41. † Deut. xxv. 4:  
1 Cor. ix. 9. 1 Tim. v. 18.

from the same principle, that *the merciful man regardeth the life of his beast*\*. Thus the grain that is given for bread to strengthen man's heart, and the fruits that yield us their cooling and refreshing juices, must first afford nourishment to the birds of the air, and perhaps be fed upon by an insect or a fly. What an amiable idea of Providence does this exhibit to us! and how gracious is that benevolence which condescends to minister to the wants of beings so seemingly useless and insignificant. *For even these wait all upon thee, O God; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.* *That thou giveſt them they gather.* *Thou openest thine hand, and they are filled with good*†. But further.—A contemplative mind will perceive the all-provident hand of God in the very contention of the elements and changes of the seasons; and how all things work together for good to those beings whose dependence is upon him. Thus when the Almighty thundereth with the voice of his excellency ‡, and sendeth forth lightnings with the rain, and bringeth the winds out of his treasures §: at the same time that these

\* Prov. xii. 10. † Ps. civ. 27, 28. ‡ Job xxxvii. 4.  
§ Jer. x. 13.

wonderful operations impress upon the minds of men an awful sense of the *majesty* of God, they are in effect so many gracious dispensations of his *mercy*; by dispelling those noxious, unwholesome vapours, which a long continued serenity would naturally produce. Thus again, when in the winter *he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes, and casteth forth his ice like morsels*; so that in the language of scripture; *the earth which is under us shall be as iron*; experience soon teaches us how the soil is thereby enriched and fertilized with nitrous salts, and its prolific powers treasured up within its frozen surface. But when, in the spring, *he sendeth forth his word and melteth them*; when *he causeth his soft wind to blow, and his paths to drop fatness*; the powers of vegetation are immediately released from their confinement, and nature, again reviving, begins to clear the eye with its refreshing verdure. The seeds that were committed to the fostering bosom of the earth, or the fruits that were inclosed within the tender bud, begin to open and expand their delicate fibres. The flowers also throw out their various colours, and appear so gaily decked, that *even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed*

rayed like one of these. The fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, unfolds its blossom to the warmth of the sun, till, as the prophet expresses it, *the new wine is found in the cluster, and a blessing is in it* \*.

It is a discovery drawn from the late accurate enquiries into the works of nature, that every single seed contains within its shell, the stem, the leaves, the fruit, and all the constituent parts of its respective species.— And what hand, save that of the Almighty, who appears as much so in this *leaf*, as in the *greatest* of his works, could fold with such curious art, so much vegetable perfection, and such various forms, in so small a compass †. Thus our blessed Saviour observes, that *the earth in obedience to the first command of the Creator, bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear; after that the full corn in the ear*. But the wonder will yet increase upon us, if we consider this single seed as endowed with a capacity not only of repairing, but of multiplying its kind; *some to thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold*: perhaps in a due proportion to the respective

\* If. lxy. 8.      † See sermon xxii. vol. ii. p. 13.

wants of animal life in general; if we could perceive those remote adjustments that are before the all-seeing eye of Providence, and which are brought about by the reciprocal exchanges of social and commercial life. So manifold are the works of God; *in such wisdom hath he made them all!* *The earth O Lord is full of thy goodness* \*! *He crowneth the year with his goodness, and filleth us with the fat of wheat* †. *He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herbs for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man's heart* ‡.

Such are the pious sentiments which the sacred writings should inspire us with, when we walk out into the fields *to meditate at the even-tide*; so that whilst we are pleasing the sensitive faculties, with surveying the rich and beautiful face of nature, we might also be advancing our moral happiness, and gathering fruit unto eternal life. And what pleasure is so refined, what amusement so innocent, what entertainment so cheaply pur-

\* Ps. lxxv. 11. † Ps. civ. 14, 15. ‡ Ps. cxlvii. 14.  
chased

chased, as those we are here presented with; which always satisfy, but never satiate; which delight, but never corrupt the heart; and which all mankind have an equal right to behold, though all may not be equally qualified to admire. When therefore we devote our evening hours to such recreations as these, we devote them to innocence, and the pursuit of virtue and knowledge.—When we are thus sequestered from the deceitful ways of man, from the allurements to vice, the prevalence of custom, or the persuasion of example; our nature is, for the time at least, restored to its primitive purity: the fields and groves are, as it were, *the garden of the Lord*, wherein, like the pious men of ancient times, we also may be said to *walk with God*, conversing with him in his works and *giving him praise for the operations of his hands*.—It was no wrong philosophy in the heathen writers to assert, that all things were full of the Deity; and though we need not carry our speculations so high in this life, as to see *all things in God*\*; yet we may without any

\* This notion of *seeing all things in God*, was started by Father Malebranche, in his *De la recherche de la*

any imputation of enthusiasm, *see God* in all things.

I might now enlarge on a variety of religious and moral duties, as resulting from the foregoing particulars of our meditation : how we should thence learn to rely entirely on the providence, and express a grateful sense of the goodness of God ; to be *moderate* in the enjoyment, and *benevolent* in the distribution of the good things of this life ; but I shall close the whole with the exhortation of an inspired lawgiver to a sincere and constant prac-

verité ; or, search after truth, printed in Paris 1684. The design of this visionary philosopher in this treatise, was to point out the errors into which we are daily led by our senses, imagination, and passions, and to prescribe a method for discovering truth, which he does, by starting the notion of *seeing all things in God*. In the year 1715, F. du Tertre, a Jesuit, published, what he imagined, an ample confutation of Malebranchism. This system was also charged with atheism, by F. Hardouin, in his Atheists unmasked ; although his system, the offspring of a warm and luxuriant imagination is (as the Bishop hints) more justly chargeable with enthusiasm than atheism. That part which relates to our *seeing all things in God*, has been amply refuted by Mr. Locke, in his Examination of F. Malebranche's opinion, vol. iii. p. 429. Posthumous Works.

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S E R M O N XXXV. 245

tice of the duties of our religion, which alone can sanctify the enjoyment of those various blessings of life, which are at any time dispensed to us. “*Beware, says he, that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes: lest when thou hast eaten, and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein, and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied; and all that thou hast is multiplied: then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, and say in thine heart, my power and the might of my hand, hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth* \*

\* Deut. viii. 10—17.

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## S E R M O N XXXVI.

THE PROPER USE AND IMPROVEMENT  
OF TIME.

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REV. X. 5, 6.

*And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea,  
and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to hea-  
ven, and sware by him that liveth for ever  
and ever,—that there should be time no longer.*

IT is observable, that in the sacred writings, events of more than ordinary importance, are always proclaimed to the world with more than ordinary pomp and solemnity. Thus, to mention no other, the two greatest, and most interesting events to us, as men and christians ; the one, when the glad tidings of our salvation were announced, and the other, when the time of our probation will be closed, are each of them represented to us under such

strong and affecting images, as may not only excite, but fix, our attention to the importance of the respective declarations. In both cases, indeed, an angel is the herald of the Almighty, and charged with the manifestation of his will. The former we find arrayed in the mild beams of benevolence and mercy: but the latter comes invested with all the attributes of power and justice: and as *that* addressed himself to the world in the endearing language of *peace on earth, and goodwill towards men*: this alarms it with a voice of terror, and swears by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there shall be time no longer. In a word, *life and immortality are brought to light* by the one: death, and a fearful looking for of judgment are denounced by the other.

To go about to explain this mysterious passage, would be to engage in an attempt, wherein there can only be large scope for conjecture, perhaps no sure ground of certainty: and therefore the inquiry would, at best, convey to us more amusement, than instruction.—And yet I cannot proceed to those useful reflections, which this portion of scripture suggests to us, without stopping to observe,

what a marvellous and affecting description it contains; and under what sublime images the action is represented; as if the last warning to a thoughtless and inconsiderate world, was to be pronounced with the most irresistible proofs of veracity. To this end, all the powers of the several elements conspire to render the person of the mighty angel that was to proclaim it, more illustriously awful. *He was clothed, says the sacred writer, in a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head;* that glorious arch of heaven, which *the hand of the Almighty himself had bended.* As this was the distinguishing token of mercy to the remains of a sinful world that *perished by water;* so it seems to have been again displayed to remind the present world, that although the covenant of mercy still subsisted, the time of God's forbearance and long suffering was about to be limited. The description goes on, and tells us, that *his face was as the splendor of the sun,* as if by that he was to bring to light the *hidden works of darkness*—and *his feet were as pillars of fire;* by which, to use the language of scripture, he could *burn up the ungodly of the earth as chaff.* Thus invested with the terrors of the Almighty, he proceeds

ceeds to execute his great commission, the manner of which is in every respect awful and affecting. For he is represented as setting *his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth*; as claiming an absolute dominion over both constituent parts of the globe: when lifting *up his hand to heaven*, that every intelligent being of the universe might bear witness to the divine decree, he swears, and that *by him who liveth for ever and ever*; by him that called forth the bright divisions of time out of undistinguishable darkness: *by him who made the heavens, the earth, the seas, and all that is therein*; he swears, *that there shall be time no longer*.—Such is the awful and affecting manner in which this declaration is pronounced. But whether it relates to the determinate period of time, which the divine wisdom had set to the persecution of the *Christians*, the dispersion of the *Jews*, or the duration of the world, does not so much import us to know, as it does to consider the force and weight of the conclusion which it naturally suggests to us, viz., that, if the present life *be*, as it certainly *is*, a state of trial and probation for that which is to come, and the time of our duration here

is now limited by the wise author of our being to a short, and certain, but to us unknown, period; then will it become us, both as rational, religious and accountable creatures, to look well to the management of our time, because on that alone depends a happy or miserable eternity.

The conclusion is awful and interesting: human nature hath a common concern in it; and though *every season* is proper for enforcing it, yet the present is peculiarly so; not only because it is the *present*, but because we cannot better express our gratitude for the gracious indulgence of the days that are past, and the year that is gone; than by resolving to secure every spiritual advantage from those which *may* be to come. This would be a sure method of rendering those years happy in reality, which the benevolent custom of the season leads us to wish each other in compliment. How many these may be depends upon the will of God: but how happy they may be will depend upon our own conduct. For to let our time run on, without allotting any portion of it to the use of our thinking, and reflecting powers, (which only can discover what

what we are, and instruct us what we *may be*) is not to lead a *rational*, but a mere *animal* life ; and to deprive the *soul* of that share of *time* which it hath a right to enjoy, independent of the *body*. And, indeed, the state and condition, of that most valuable part of our nature, must either be sometimes looked into, or, like a fine structure uninhabited, it will imperceptibly go to ruin and decay. A considerate mind, therefore, will soon perceive the importance of a prudent application of *time*, and whenever we turn our thoughts inward upon ourselves, to try the force of our *own* reflections ; we must be convinced, that the design of a wise and gracious Creator in placing us on this transitory scene, was for a much nobler purpose than barely to enjoy for a few years the pleasures of a social, or the gratifications of a sensual life ; and indeed, our reason and conscience, our hopes and fears, our frame and constitution, every principle within us, if duly attended to, must clearly convince us, that we are made for immortality. For whence (it may be asked) is that superiority of power, which mankind have acquired over all other animals, but from the superior excellence of our rational nature ?

nature? In strength of body many of them far excel us, in activity and velocity many more; and yet, subject as they all are to man, may it not thence be inferred, that mere animal powers, are a far less valuable endowment than the rational faculties of the human species?—but, to what end are we endowed with these faculties? Is it only to supply the defects of bodily strength; or to teach us how to vary our enjoyments, and accomplish our desires? and is the spiritual part of us so necessarily connected with the body, as to be determined by the same short and transitory duration? But, if this was the case, would not the force and vigour of the mind fall invariably into decay with that of the body?—Whereas it is obvious, that the rational powers, if not wilfully or accidentally impaired, often acquire additional strength and have a clearer perception of things in proportion as those of the body draw nearer their dissolution. These then must be distinct parts of the human composition: and as the one, by a natural tendency to decay, has its period in time, the other by its progressive improvement extends to eternity.—But that being quite another state of existence, we are thence led.

led to consider, whether, as man did not of *himself* produce his rational faculties, he must not be accountable for the use of them to that supreme Being from whom he received them?—Now even in this state we find that the soul is endowed with the same distinctive consciousness of moral good, or virtue, as the senses are with the perceptions of natural good or pleasure; and that we can no more resist the convictions of the former, than we can be unaffected by the sensations of the latter. If we obey the dictates of our rational faculties, are not complacency and self-satisfaction the never-failing consequences of the rectitude of our wills? but if we are carried away by the inordinate impulse of our appetites, does not the gratification as constantly end in self-accusation and remorse? Here then seems to be a strong and active principle within us, ever busy in reviewing all our actions, and deciding upon our conduct; a principle that would be an unnecessary part of our nature, were we to be accountable to no other than ourselves, and that only in the present life: but as the allwise Author of our being could never form any thing but for great and good purposes, we must finally conclude

clude, that, this self-applauding, or condemning consciousness, was graciously superadded to our other faculties, to serve as a presage, or internal evidence, of the strict account we must give hereafter: and, as we have daily experience of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, it imports us to adjust it with immediate care and exactness; that instead of disquieting our life with fearful apprehensions of *possible* and *future misery*, we may sweeten every enjoyment with the pleasing expectation of *actual* and *future happiness*.

Thus deducing the necessity of a due improvement of time, by attending to what passes within our own minds, (from whence arises a strong presentiment that we must hereafter be accountable for the use of it),—we may proceed to add further light to these and such like probable conjectures of *reason*, from the clear and express discoveries of *revelation*. The veil of obscurity is there taken away, the probationary state of human nature, every where inculcated, and the terms of our acceptance fixed and adjusted. We are there taught that our present life is a life of *warfare*, wherein we should always be upon

upon our guard; should watch that we be not surprised, and pray that we be not vanquished: that we are intrusted with time as with a talent, which is neither to be extravagantly squandered away, nor unprofitably laid up in safe keeping; but to be placed out to improvement, that it may be accounted for with satisfaction: and, to impress the mind with a right sense of these obligations, we are further taught, that, *we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive according to the works done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil*\*.

These, and many other declarations of scripture, relative to the point before us, should lead us to conclude of how great importance it is to the whole of our existence, so to manage every portion of our present time, as to be duly prepared for that final, but uncertain period, when *there shall be time no longer*.

Now to a religious and contemplative mind there can be no other difference between what certainly *will be*, and what is *actually* present, but that uncertain, and perhaps very short in-

\* 2 Cor. v. 10. Rom. xiv. 10.

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terval of time that is daily decreasing, and never continueth at one stay. But the misfortune is, that it requires more thought and discernment, than the generality of mankind are masters of, to give presence to futurity ; or, as the apostle expresses it, to *call the things that are not* (but certainly will be) *as though they were*. Too many among us, like the Grecian monarch, want to be daily reminded that they are *men* ; lest they should forget that they are *mortal*. To people, of this thoughtless turn, who look upon life as a part of their possessions, which they have a right to squander away as they please ; every portion of time is burthensome, that is not relieved by amusement. In vain does religion recommend to them the *one thing needful*, and set before them the blessings that will follow a life well spent : in vain does wisdom assure them, that *her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*. Impetuous and headstrong they listen not to the *still small voice* of reason and religion ; but will either drive through the road of life in full career, and have relays of pastime provided for them at every turn ; or, if the journey should prove tiresome, they will indolently

lently repose themselves on the flowery banks of pleasure that grow by the way-side.—But alas ! how often may the foolish loiterers let the *sun of mercy* go down, without considering what an important errand they were upon, and so be unhappily lost in the *night of death!*

Not that it is the intention of religion to abridge us in *using the good things* of life, whilst refreshment is the *end*, and moderation the *measure* of our enjoyments : but if it enjoins us an entire abstinence from *vicious* pleasures ; and allows not of a *total* dissipation of our time on *any* pleasures, what does it more than prudence itself would direct us ? The royal moralist, who was well versed both in the ways of virtue and pleasure, tells us, that there is *time* (enough, if properly applied,) for every thing under the *sun* ; a *time to laugh*, and a *time to weep*—i. e. a *time to indulge the smiling joys* of life ; and a *time also to bewail* that frailty in our nature, which may have disposed us to an immoderate attachment to them. The true art then of *using time*, is to enjoy it with discretion ; not to squander it away with a careless indifference.

And

And hence it should seem, as if one might even distinguish a life of virtue and piety, from one of vice and sensuality, by the different value which each party sets upon his time. To the former it is a treasure that brings in the greater interest the more properly it is dispos'd of: but to the latter it appears an *inexhaustible*, untold sum, which is soon reduced to nothing, because squandered away without accompt — and yet it *might* be expected, that the man of *this* world, who looks for no other happiness than what is to be found in the *enjoyments* of it, should be *particularly* frugal of his time, because on that alone depends *his* chief felicity; and, on the other hand, that he, who, lightly regarding the transient pleasures of this world, fixes his principal aim on the endless joys of the next, should wish away every interval of time that detains him from it. Whereas the very reverse of this is generally the case: for the sensualist is the most *prodigal* of time, the virtuous the best *œconomist*; for whom it procures wealth, peace, and a happy immortality; whilst for the other it purchases nothing but want, despair, and death.—Indeed the advantages, that may be drawn from a

prudent use of our *time* in temporal concerns, are readily seen, and often experienced. Prosperity and success, by the natural appointment of things, almost inseparably attend on industry, regularity, and a careful attention to every favourable opportunity: but he that idly saunters away his time, *the sluggard, who, as the wise man observes, folds his hands n his bosom,* shall surely come to poverty. Now the consequences will be just the same in our spiritual concerns: why then are we so inconsiderate as to overlook the comparison? For in vain do we watch every little occasion of adding to our *treasures* on earth, if we neglect the many favourable ones that offer for laying up an adequate *treasure in heaven;* especially as we ought to consider, that life and fortune are so slenderly connected; time and eternity so thinly divided, that even *this night our souls may be required of us:* and then, little will it avail us to have been rich in *this world's goods,* if we be not also found to be rich towards God.

It is an observation of an ingenious Roman moralist, that “people are ready enough to  
“ acknowledge themselves obliged for every  
“ trifling

\* trifling favour that is done them, though  
“ few have the gratitude to be *thankful*, and  
“ none the ability to make a return, for the  
“ gift of time.”—Indeed the only return we  
can make, is to use it for *our own happiness* ;  
and then it will be for the *glory of God* who  
*gave* it. For however mankind may be styled  
the lords of this lower world, as to the free  
use of its productions, yet *time*, and the se-  
veral portions of it, are the peculiar and in-  
herent property of him *in whose hand is eter-*  
*nity*. Accordingly the allwise Providence  
seems more reserved in his dispensations of  
this, than of any other human blessing. The  
*riches*, and *honours* and *pleasures* of the world,  
are often showered down upon men at once,  
and in full abundance ; but the *gifts of time*  
are distributed with a frugal hand ; in the  
scanty parcels of *days*, and *hours*, and *minutes* ;  
and should not this teach us, that the present  
moments only can secure our final happiness,  
and that we vainly depend on the *morrow*,  
since we know not what *to-day* may bring  
*forth* ?

I would only observe further, that the my-  
thologists, or moral painters, represent time,

as he advances towards us with the feeble impotence and tardiness of old age ; with a slow, and almost imperceptible motion. And though we discover, as he passes, the rapidity of his progress ; that he is winged with speed, and endowed with strength able to subdue all things unto *himself* ; yet we soon drop the idea of his velocity, and by seeing him still in the same line of direction with ourselves, and the object of our wishes, are apt to imagine, that his motion is as slow and tardy as before.—The picture is taken from common life : for short and swift as the *whole* period of it is, we nevertheless use it, as if it were never to have an end : still, between our desires and their gratification, wishing away the tedious interval : impatient when we see the seed-time, or the tender blade of expectation, till we are blessed with the full harvest of possession : happy then, and contented, to have time to stop the rapidity of its flight ; when every one is so fully satisfied with his respective enjoyments, that he only wishes for the extraordinary power of Joshua, to bid *the sun stand still*, and the *moon* not to hasten its going down.—But if we hope to be endowed with the *power*, we must endeavour

## S E R M O N XXXVI. 2

to acquire the *piety* of Joshua; which, though unable to extend the *dimensions* of time, may however make the circle complete and perfect. *For honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years; but wisdom, or religion, is the grey hairs unto men, and an unspotted life is old age*\*. We know, indeed, that a gracious Providence was pleased to protract the life of the good king *Hezekiah* fifteen years beyond the appointed period; the preservation of so much virtue being of the last importance to the happiness of his people: (and may the people of this land deserve to be blessed with the same merciful interposition!) but we are also taught, by the greatest example that ever lived, even that of Christ himself, that all possible perfection may be comprised in half the *usual term of human life.*

Let us then, my brethren, be ever careful neither to mistake the end of life, nor misapply the means of it.—The end of this life is happiness in another: the means that lead to it are virtue and religion; and a constant

\* *Wisd. iv. 9.*

## S E R M O N XXXVI.

habit of these can only be acquired by a prudent use of time.—Let us remember also, and live as if we did remember, that we are not now inhabitants of the primitive world, when the age of man was protracted to many centuries; and when, if one may be allowed the conjecture, the divisions of time were proportionably long, and distinguished only by the *sun which ruled the day, and the moon and stars which governed the night*: But now, when our life *passeth away like a shadow*, the divine wisdom hath taught us, to make that very shadow the measure of our  *fleeting moments*, which is also the emblem of our *transitory life*. And happy should we be, were we as wise in *applying* the several portions of *time*, as we are ingenious in *dividing* them; happy if we thence learnt this important lesson, *so to number our days*, as to *apply our hearts unto wisdom*.

Upon the whole, my brethren, let us daily keep in mind, that the awful period is hourly approaching, when, with respect to each of us, the solemn denunciation in the text will be accomplished, that *there shall be time no*

*longer.*

## S E R M O N XXXVI. 26c

*longer.* But how long is uncertain.—Enough, we will humbly hope, if we use it well, to secure us an eternity of happiness; to redeem the years that are past, and the days that have been consumed in vanity and folly: enough, if we reflect, and profit from the reflection, that we *have been* thoughtless and sinful creatures; if we consider what we *are at present*, a frail and perishable substance; and look forwards to what we *may be hereafter*, happy, or miserable, to endless ages.

B E R-

1882. No. 11. 5. 3. 6

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a desire to buy his own business and own  
his own home. He must be willing to work  
and the place will be at the same time  
a good place to live in. The business is  
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## SERMON XXXVII.

## ON THE VIRTUES BECOMING THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

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PHILIP. iv. 8.

*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely and of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

IT is the great excellence of the christian religion, that its *doctrines* carry along with them all the conviction which is necessary to fix our *faith*, and its *precepts* all the motives that are requisite to influence our *practice*.—As the gospel dispensation was graciously intended to be a standing rule of faith and practice; so the divine author of our religion

Religion was pleased as well to live for our instruction, as to die for our redemption. And if any part in the great scheme of duty was left unfinished by himself, it was perfectly completed in the lives and writings of his apostles. Those of St. Paul, in particular, cannot fail of convincing every attentive and unprejudiced reader, on what rational principles he explains the *doctrines* of christianity, and with what powerful motives he enforces the *precepts* of it, appealing to the reason of mankind for the truth of the one; to the dignity of their nature for the observance of the other; and to a future state of rewards and punishments, for their conformity to both. His several epistles to his christian converts, sometimes the striking pictures of his own heart, display the charms and graces of a good life in a most engaging manner; at other times they are a true and faithful *glass* he sets before them, wherein they may not only see the stains and pollutions of corrupted nature, but see also how to cleanse and put them away.— Even in this short epistle to the Philippians, we see his temper of mind so open and ingenuous, his perseverance in the cause of virtue and religion so firm and unshaken (though

at that very time imprisoned for the cause of it), his acknowledgements for their kindness so full of gratitude, and yet consistent with the dignity of his character; the relation of his sufferings so modest; and his reflections upon them so full of resignation; the precepts of religion enforced with such a proper energy, and his exhortations to the practice of them addressed in a manner so affecting, as at once to convince them that they were as much the object of *their duty* as *his desire*. So that whoever considers these different excellencies in this epistle, (even abstracted from revelation, and merely as a human composition,) must acknowledge the author to have been a person of very extraordinary accomplishments and the greatest example of virtue that any age or nation ever produced.

Nor did this great man content himself with displaying at large our obligations to a virtuous life, and pressing them upon us with suitable applications; but that the mind might not lose sight of its principal object, or be tired with a tedious survey of the several branches of duty, he, in the text, very concisely reminds us of the whole of his exhortations,

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tations; and in one verse, presents us with the most complete list of moral duties that can be produced; ranging the whole in such order, that though each might be engaging in itself, their collected force should make an irresistible impression on the will and affections.—*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true—honest—just—pure—lovely—of good report—if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

And when can we more properly think of them than at this good season, peculiarly set apart for thought and reformation? There is indeed little more than thought wanted to make us happy; and it is the neglect of it that too often makes us miserable. To retire sometimes from the busy scenes of life, when we are commanded for awhile to retire from the eating, drinking, and trifling world, that the soul being refined from the fumes of intemperance, may take a clear review of its past follies, freely meditate upon their pernicious tendency, and so be convinced that real happiness is not to be built upon the sandy foundation of sensual pleasures, but upon the rock of virtue and religion, if we would have the

the structure withstand the winds of vanity,  
or the overflowings of ungodliness; and it has  
done it by a simple direct hand.

The plan for this good purpose is distinctly  
laid down for us in the text, and it imports  
us, as we value our well-being here and here-  
after, first (to form true and just notions of  
these several obligations to our duty) to *think*  
*on these things*, and then with a diligence be-  
coming their importance, to reduce them to  
practice.

To begin then, where all our inquiries  
should begin, with *truth*, which the apostle  
lays down as his first principle, and the foun-  
dation of all virtue. *Whatsoever things are*  
*true*.—Now *truth*, in a moral sense, may be  
said to be that just relation and agreement be-  
tween *actions* and their causes, which necessarily  
results from the nature of things, and is founded  
in that natural rectitude of mind which leadeth  
a man to *speak the truth to his neighbour*, and  
*which deceiveth him not, though it were to his*  
*own hindrance*. It is, indeed, that supreme  
rule of right, to which every reasonable crea-  
ture *should* bend and submit—that internal  
voice of uncorrupted reason, which demands

the

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the attention and veneration of all mankind, and to which beings of a *superior* order listen, and obey with pleasure.—Even God himself, when he is said to be *a law unto himself*, is, in all his dispensations, determined by the eternal and immutable obligations of truth and righteousness. And if the almighty Creator and Governor of the universe deem it no diminution of his majesty to conform to this supreme law, let not the greatest among men presume to suppress its evidence, or resist its force. In vain shall we plead our ignorance, in vain shall we urge our inability, if reason, which by some is allowed an all-sufficient light, is also our guide and assistant.—The whole circle of moral obligation lies before us, and if the rays of truth which flow from the center of it, be invariably right in themselves, we cannot swerve from them without deviating into manifest error and disorder. But if by this we measure the fitness and propriety of every thought and action, we shall then be under the direction of unerring principles; and the natural consequence will be, what is right and true.—Thus a conviction of the divine goodness will teach us *gratitude*, and a sense of divine justice a strict adherence to

*virtue*

*virtue*: the relation we stand in to our fellow-creatures, will suggest the principles of *equity* and *benevolence*; and the duty we owe ourselves a prudent restraint of our *will* and *affections*.

So far the light of reason will guide us in the path of truth; but *the sun of righteousness* opens a more distinct and extensive view; revealing to us such *truths* as reason might perhaps expect, but could by no means discover.—Reason could indeed trace out one supreme cause of all things, that had *created* man, and blessed him with a profusion of *temporal* goodness; but it could not see a most merciful Redeemer to *save* sinful man, and rescue him from the just penalty of eternal punishment. No, it was the *day-spring* of the gospel [*that from on high hath visited us*] which first clearly revealed to us the *truth* of our redemption, as also the conditions on which we are to obtain it.—These are to purify the corruptions of our nature, to check the inordinate impulse of the will, to moderate our affections, and compose our passions; to forgive, and not revenge an injury; to be void of offence towards God, and full of good-will towards man; to

have *faith* without wavering, *hope* without presumption, and *charity* without reserve.—These are the truths discovered to us by our religion.—These are the things the apostle exhorts us to *think of*; if we think of being happy.

The second principle recommended to our attention is *whatsoever things are honest*, i.e. a firm and steady adherence to whatsoever is just and right, exclusive of any selfish regards, or private views, interfering with it. The man therefore that is duly influenced by this principle, will restrain his hand from touching, or his heart from desiring the right and property of another. His tongue will not learn the language of scandal, nor his eye be blemished with the cast of envy. The laws of society will be inviolably observed, the trust reposed in him most religiously kept, so that his honesty will *shine out as the sun, his just dealing as the noon-day.*

This is the practice of men of true honour; but there is another sort of honour too impetuous to be restrained, yet too pernicious to be endured. The former flows, as all honour

nour should do, in a pure unsullied stream, doing good insensibly and without noise ; the latter runs in a rapid torrent, overbearing all that stands in its way, and ceasing not, till it is lost in *a sea of troubles.* Such is their behaviour who support your honour, chiefly by your *resentment* ; which, how trivial soever the occasion might be, nothing will appease, but making bare the arm of vengeance, and impiously usurping that prerogative which belongeth only unto God ; in whose bands are the issues of life and death, and who hath expressly declared, that *they shall have judgment without mercy, who have shewed no mercy.* But what a strange counterpart of honour is this ? and how false and inconsistent are these men's notions of this principle, sometimes straining at a gnat, at others able to swallow a camel. Tell them of their successful but vile gallantry and intrigues, and they will pride themselves upon their adventures : talk to them upon their good luck in defrauding the credulous, or over-reaching the cunning, and they will smile at their own dexterity and address—but should you thwart them in any nice point of ceremony, should you contradict them in any

palpable absurdity, or put a little unpolite negative upon their false assertions, immediately the arm of vengeance is made bare, and nothing will appease them, till they lay your honour *in the dust*.

But bright and glaring as these high pretensions to honour may be in the fashionable world, these great men would do well to consider, that among christians true honour is *humility*—is a temper of soul subdued by reason, and composed by religion, that conquers a man's enemies by *forbearance*, and makes even his foes to be at peace with him by *benovolence*: that shews a true greatness of mind, not by a captious resentment of every petty insult, but by a thorough contempt of triumphant vice, and a generous protection of distressed virtue. In this sense of the word (and this seems to be one true sense) how great a man may he be, *who is lowly in his own eyes*, and *in the eye of the world* too? who, though we fools count his life madness, and his end to be without honour, yet with an all-knowing judge will be numbered among the just, and have his lot among the saints. The word

word indeed which is here rendered *honest* \*, more properly signifies honour, or *whatsoever things are honourable*. A principle which some look upon as sufficient of itself to regulate the conduct of mankind, without any regard to religious obligation. But though a sense of honour and a regard to their reputation, may sometimes keep people from doing a mean thing, in public; it will not always prevent them from doing private injuries. For it is often found that they who affect to be most jealous of their own honour, will not much scruple to violate the honour of others, even in cases of the most delicate and affecting nature. But let honour be founded on truth, directed by virtue, and supported by the sanctions of religion, and it will always be a consistent and uniform principle of conduct: for, under that direction, our actions that are done in secret, will be as strictly honest, as if they were to be subject to public observation, or *proclaimed upon the house top*.

\* Σεμνα sic et Suidas τα τιμια, και σεβασμια. Veneranda, Augusta. Honestia abhinc deducit Stephanus. Erasmus convertit honesta, i. e. καλα. Prov. viii. 6. σεμνα εξιτια, magna, vel eximia, vulg. magna. English translation excellent things. Old English version 1595, great matters.

And thus we are led to the third principle of action, which is indeed naturally connected with the second, as whatsoever things are *honest*, those must also be *just*.—But yet there was some occasion for this distinction, as there is for those parts of a building which may appear to be useless additions; but, in reality, they contribute to strengthen and support the whole frame. For *honesty*, or at least *honour*, is often of a private nature, and regards only ourselves—whereas *justice* is of a relative kind, and lays both ourselves, and those with whom we have any sort of intercourse, under a mutual obligation: so that according to the invariable rule of equity recommended by the great preacher of righteousness, our blessed Saviour, each should do by the other as he would wish, were circumstances changed, the other would do by him. This duty then is so reciprocal, that no accidental difference of *fortune*, *rank*, or *power*, can cancel the obligation; no circumstance of *distance*, *time* or *place*, can weaken or destroy its force. It is so extensive as to reach from the one end of the earth to the other; and so prevalent, as, in the expression of the psalmist, to bind even *kings in chains*, and *nobles as with links of iron*.

And

—And however the *Sampsons* of iniquity may snap the bands of justice asunder, and cast away its cords from them, yet violence and oppression do not change the nature of justice, any more than shutting out the light, can weaken the power of the sun. They both retain their inherent brightness, and will, one day, when the *bidden works of darkness* can no longer be concealed, blaze upon the guilty with intolerable splendor.

It was the strict and inviolable observation of this principle of justice, together with a consciousness of his own integrity, which alone can make a man satisfied from himself, that drew that noble and disinterested appeal from the prophet Samuel, upon his resigning the government of the Israelites into the hands of Saul.—Behold, here I am, says he, witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken, or whose ass have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it \*.

\* 1 Sam. xii. 3.

Another principle, which equally tends to exalt the dignity of our nature is *purity*: whatsoever things are pure, or as the word more commonly signifies, whatsoever things are *chaste*; both which significations naturally enough imply a due restraint of every vicious and lawless gratification of our sensual appetites; nay, indeed, of our thoughts too, as the one very readily leads to the other.

We are often told of the ungovernable force of *appetite*, and the irresistible power of temptation; but then we as often hear of the strength and authority of human reason, and how easily it can stop the most impetuous impulse of the passions. Strange! that principles so opposite, should so often act in concert; and that the greatest advocates for the dignity of the one, should at all times so willingly submit to the usurped power of the other! But the truth is, the *libertine* opposes the sufficiency of *reason* only to the doctrines of *religion*, but lets it give way to the dictates of *sense*; so that when the voice of religion tells us, that we must *use the world as not abusing it* \*, the language of appetite and

\* Cor. vii. 31.

self-indulgence proclaims aloud, that “ God made nothing in vain, but gave us *senses* to be pleased, and *appetites* to be gratified.”— He did so,—but under such regulations as might not only secure the peace of society, but also restrain that natural proneness to self-gratification which is so destructive of present as well as future happiness.—For it must be owned, that though by *nature* we are born the children of vice, yet by habit we become the slaves of it. The seeds of impunity, which were sown by our first parents, being propagated in succeeding generations, much more by *example* than *descent*; for, by what is the innocent simplicity of youth corrupted and debauched, but either by the loose, unguarded behaviour, or the naughty and indecent discourse of people whose discretion should be as ripe as their age? Seldom it is that the conversation is so refined, and the behaviour so modest, that no obscene expression, no profane oath, proceeds out of the mouth; very little (God knows) *to the use of edifying*: on the contrary, does not a pretended delicacy often strain the invention to draw the fulsome jest with a double face, and to mince the full-mouthed oath to a better digestion?

gestion? nay, have not entertainments been introduced among us, (unknown to our chaste and sober ancestors) that the ear may hear such things as the face, could it be seen, perhaps, would *blush* at. Away with such vile nocturnal mysteries, the scandal and reproach even of the heathen world.—And yet, we know that these polite but pernicious entertainments, were transmitted to us from *a most christian kingdom indeed*; but where the virtues seem for some time to have been changing names, till at last we find, that *interest* stands for *good faith*, gallantry for the most lively hope, and the *destruction of the human species* for the most extensive *charity*! And as for impurity of conduct, the proofs of it are so visible, and so shamelessly repeated, that if they go on at this rate, neither divine nor human laws will be able to restrain the impetuosity of an abandoned temper.—One can scarce tell how to make the reflection, (it would be well if there was no occasion for it!) that in this particular depravity, human nature is sunk below that of the very *beasts that perish*. These obey only the regular impulse of nature, indulge their appetite at stated times, then get them away and are at rest:

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refl: but man, insatiable in impurity, (to say nothing of a more abominable vice) will suffer no bounds to his desires, no interruption to his views; till he has destroyed that peace of mind which is the gift of innocence; till he has imbibited the sweets of domestic happiness; till he has confounded the order of inheritance and descent, and entailed infamy, beggary, and perhaps the most loathsome diseases, upon his unhappy offspring.—And though all these sad calamities may not be the certain consequences of such impure attachments, yet there are too many fatal proofs in the world that most of them often are, even when the parties think themselves happy, but criminally happy, in the secret commission of their miserable joys; secret perhaps to the rest of the world, but not to the all-seeing eye of God, from whom no guilt can be concealed. Nor is the mischief arising from this pernicious and illegal commerce confined to the parties alone; but, among the many evils of scandalous examples, and domestic misery which they produce, the charge and burthen which they also bring upon parishes, thereby robbing the aged and industrious, the fatherless and widows, of their

their sustenance, is sorely felt, and justly complained of. But, *my son*, says the royal preacher, *do thou drink pure waters out of thy own cistern, and rejoice with the wife of thy youth; for why wilt thou be ravished with a strange woman, or embrace the bosom of a stranger, for her feet go down to death; her steps take hold of hell*\*.

From thus exhorting us to *whatsoever things are chaste, or pure*, the apostle proceeds by a very natural transition to *whatsoever things are lovely*. Purity indeed and loveliness are sister graces, or rather, this is the amiable offspring of that graceful parent. The one is a plant of the growth of heaven, and the other, those never-fading fruits of complacency and joy, by which it is known.—Hence it is, that an amiable behaviour, and a benevolent temper, naturally result from a heart refined from vice and purified from iniquity; for as the affections of the mind do best discover themselves by the correspondent actions of the body, so when the thoughts upon retiring to communion with the heart, are elevated with a consciousness that all within is pure and spotless, the

\* Prov. ii. 18. v. 5. xv. 7, 5.

counenance itself will contract a share of that fulness of joy ; just as the face of Moses is said to have acquired a most astonishing brightness from his intercourse with God, the source and fountain of all purity.

What therefore we have here recommended to our imitation are, either all those precepts, and examples of christian morality, that tended to correct the morose and selfish disposition of the Jews, and to purify the gross licentiousness of the Heathens ; or the lovely and amiable effects of those precepts, displayed in the humanity, benevolence, and charity of mankind ; and such social virtues as promote the peace and happiness of a people.—It is indeed to exhibit *burning and shining lights* of the practical goodness of christianity, to those who cannot discover its loveliness by the dim taper of speculative enquiries. For a virtuous and good life is the clearest comment upon good doctrine. You thereby shew the world not only that you know the will of God, but that you have a delight in the practice of it. Not but piety and virtue are really *lovely* in themselves, even under the veil of privacy and retirement, and will not fail  
of

of their reward from him who seeth in secret; but still they must be allowed to want that efficacy which flows from an amiable example, and which, by letting our light so shine before men, as to see our good works, they may thence be led to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Again, that our considerations on these several principles of duty might not want even a personal motive to animate our endeavours and confirm our obedience, the apostle immediately subjoins, *whatsoever things are of good report*, i. e. whatever opportunities the situation and circumstances of your life give you, of doing such actions as may gain you the esteem of mankind, these are well worth your attention and practice; for insensible as the generality of the world may be to true merit, yet the good and virtuous will not fail to distinguish and applaud a behaviour which is formed upon the principles of truth, justice, temperance, and those commendable motives which the apostle has here laid down. Thus we read, that because *Cornelius the Centurion was a just man, and one that feared God*, he was therefore of good report among all the nation

*tion of the Jews* \*.—And indeed fame, and the good opinion of the world, is neither a wrong motive, nor a weak support, to laudable actions. By this the best of men have been animated to *virtue*, the worst sometimes reclaimed from *vice*. For to be heedless and indifferent about our character, will make us equally indifferent about our behaviour; and would any one neglect to cultivate and deserve the esteem of the worthy part of mankind, because he is evil spoken of through the prejudice or misinformation of a few? Even the good apostle himself felt the sting of *evil*, as well as enjoyed the sweets of *good report*; but how much more that illustrious instance of all-perfect but suffering goodness, who though *he went about continually doing good*, yet was hurried out of the world with a reproach as ignominious as that thrown on the apostle, *Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live* †.

Besides, a due regard to the good report of the world, is no improper incitement to virtue, as it is a kind of immortality which survives us when death has stripped us of

\* *Acts x. 22:*      † *Ibid. xxii. 22. John xix. 15.*

*every*

every thing else ; for then the *righteous* shall be bad in everlasting remembrance \* ; and the effects of his virtue and goodness will be often felt, when the possessor of them is no more ; just as the air is most filled with the fragrant odour of the incense, when the substance itself is consumed and burnt away.

And now that the divine teacher might close this important lesson of moral duties by subjoining an earnest exhortation to the observance of them, he conjures his generous converts in very affecting terms, that, if there be any such thing as real *virtue* in the world ; if there be any obligation, arising from the *nature and reason of things*, to the practice of it ; and if there be any *praise* resulting from an unreserved compliance with this obligation, (either as the applause of good men in the *life that now is*, or the approbation of God in that which is to come) they would think of these things : think of them with an unprejudiced attention, with a deliberation worthy of rational and accountable beings, till by thinking on these things we may be led to believe them, and from believing, proceed to practise them.—And happy would it be for

the world, were the conduct and behaviour of mankind conformable to the several principles of duty here laid down; for then, *whatsoever things are true* would enlighten our minds, *whatsoever things are honest* would influence our actions; *whatsoever things are just* would direct our dealings, *whatsoever things are pure* would refine our desires; *whatsoever things are lovely* would be the object of our imitation, and *whatsoever things are of good report* the foundation of our esteem: in a word, *virtue* and *piety* would be our practice here, and *praise* and *glory* our possession and reward hereafter.

*Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy: to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and ever* \*.

\* Jude 24.

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## SERMON XXXVIII.

THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF A  
POPISH GOVERNMENT, DESTRUCTIVE  
OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,

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JOEL ii. part of ver. 20.

*But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate.*

IT may be observed of the writings of the sacred prophets in general, that the solemnity with which they introduce their predictions to the people is always equal to the importance of the subject. The prophet *Joel* gives us a remarkable instance of this in the chapter now before us. His intention was, to alarm the people of the *Jews*, by a very solemn advertisement, of their approaching danger. This was no less than a sudden and

unexpected invasion of their kingdom (as the commentators generally expound this passage) by the *Affyrians*, and the actual siege of *Jerusalem*, their capital.

The prophet, on this great occasion, does not open his prediction in the usual form of *thus saith the Lord, or hear, O my people;* but as if he would reproach those who ought to have been more active in preparing against such imminent danger, begins his recital, by giving his orders with the dignity, and in the stile of a general: *Blow the trumpet, says he, in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain, that all the inhabitants of the earth may tremble.* An appeal so awful, could not fail of making a due impression on the minds of the hearers, and cause them to listen to such means as might best avert so great a calamity. The repelling force by force was a natural resolution, and, no doubt, undertaken with the greatest alacrity: but the prophet, their best counsellor, because best acquainted with the divine decrees, knew how vain it was to confide in the *arm of flesh*, if that of the Almighty was not with them. He therefore admonishes them to consider, whether they had

had not been guilty of such repeated acts of disobedience to the commands of God, and such coldness and indifference to his service, as might justly provoke him to send this sore visitation upon them: if so, it would become them to humble themselves before him, and endeavour to appease the wrath that was gone out from him; *for now, adds he, is the great and terrible day of the Lord come.* Hitherto he had mercifully tried to reclaim them from their vices by gentler chastisements; the locust and the canker-worm had been the mild ministers of his wrath: but now *a nation was coming upon them from afar;* a nation barbarous in their manners, and idolatrous in their customs; that should *run like mighty men,* and *climb the wall like men of war;* should *march every one on his ways, and should not break his ranks.*

Threatened with these calamitous circumstances, there was no time to be lost from their immediate humiliation and repentance. The prophet therefore, to quicken their zeal, and animate their dejected spirits, not only repeats his awful summons, but to the *possible expectation of the divine favour,* now adds

the absolute and infallible promise of it.—Again, he cries, *Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders: let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and say, spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen may rule over them.*—Then, as he adds, *will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people; yea the Lord will answer, and say unto his people, Behold, I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen, but I will remove far off from you the northern army, and drive him into a land barren and desolate* \*.

Such was the occasion on which this prophetic assurance in the text was given to the Jewish nation. If the circumstances of this our country bear any resemblance to theirs, it will become us to imitate them in the same sincere repentance, if we would be equally happy in the divine protection.—But, to our reproach be it spoken, there is this unhappy difference in our conditions, that whereas their danger proceeded solely from their na-

\* Joel ii. 15, &c.

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tural and avowed enemies, the *Affyrians*, ours is greatly owing to the base disaffection and disloyalty of our fellow-subjects : an ungrateful, perfidious set of men ! many of whom owe their lives, and the present opportunity of repeating their rebellious practices, to the ill-bestowed clemency of that very government against which they most audaciously dare to contend. But surely as the Most High himself is the fountain of all authority, (his delegation of which to the sacred person of our sovereign has been solemnly ratified by the voice and consent of the people) we have therefore the justest reason to believe that this almighty and equitable being *will pour out his indignation* on those who maliciously disturb the pure stream of loyalty, or endeavour, by force and violence, to divert it into another channel.

And if ever there was a time when we had cause to expect, or ought more particularly to implore the favourable interposition of Providence, it certainly is now, when every thing depends upon it that is dear to men, to *Englishmen*, to protestants. As men, our lives are at stake ; as *Englishmen*, our liberties ; and

as protestants, our religion. All is now in twofold danger from a domestic and foreign enemy: and though we can oppose a most generous courage to the base barbarity of the one, and an unsubmitting power to the perfidy of the other; yet the assistance of such a power as can with ease *set bounds to the fury of the oppressor*, and *remove far off this northern army*, will be best procured by a firm and pious dependence on the God of hosts, that he will give us *strength unto the battle*, and enable us to *stop the feet of them that are swift to shed blood*. He regardeth not iniquity without abhorrence, neither will he let it escape without punishment. A truth which is not more applicable to any crime than that of rebellion; because for a person to rebel against his just and rightful king, is indeed to rebel against his God; especially when the laws of God, and the laws of the land have been the constant rule of his proceedings, and every act of power is free from oppression, every part of property secure from violence.—But perhaps a brief inquiry, first into the state of our civil and religious liberties, and secondly into the principles and practices of those who vainly pretend to deprive us of that

that inestimable blessing, may help us to trace out the cause of our present troubles, and inspire us with a seasonable detestation of the authors of them.

I. Civil liberty, then, may be said to be founded on a natural right of doing what we please; so far as is consistent with the laws of that community, of which we are members \*. In a free monarchy (such as we happily enjoy) the actions of the sovereign, and those of the subject are severally liable to this restriction: only with this difference, that where the laws are silent, or unequal to the requisite provision of any particular emergency, there the royal prerogative may exert itself with the force of a law, provided it tend to the mutual safety and protection of the community. For it is the peculiar happiness of this government, that the prince has no interests distinct from those of his people; a felicity vainly sought for elsewhere; where humour and caprice take the place of law and

\* *Libertas quidem (ex qua etiam liberi vocantur) est naturalis facultas ejus quod cuique facere libet, nisi si quid vi aut jure prohibetur.*

Vid. *Inst. Imp.*  
equity,

equity, and authority only serves to promote the ends of ambition.

But this is far from being the case with us; and if it were possible for men to examine our several public proceedings, with a truly dispassionate spirit, they would certainly find no just cause to oppose, what they had no just reason to condemn. Fears indeed and apprehensions may, like a misty medium, represent objects greater than they really are, especially when malice gives them a glaring colour. But let any one recollect each particular act of the royal prerogative since the present illustrious family filled the throne of these realms, and point out any one proceeding of arbitrary power, any one encroachment upon our civil or religious properties. On the contrary, it is to be feared, that the remarkable indulgence of the present government has only tended to nourish the virulent disease of discontent, which in a generous mind it would have entirely cured. Long enjoyment produced an insensibility of our happiness, and liberty, with all its perfections, lost the power to please those, whose perverse temper led them to abuse it. Strange incon-

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stancy ! for men to cast off with indifference what was purchased by their forefathers at the expence of so much blood and treasure. *Liberty* among them was a venerable personage. In its infancy it was caressed and admired ; and though various were its struggles for life, yet the *revolution* gave it health, and the *protestant succession* advanced it to manhood. Its good qualities grew with its years, and so indisputable was its decision, that its word was a law to both prince and people.— But now, instead of being reverenced for its age, we have the misfortune to find it despised for its infirmities ; and what has hitherto been our glory, and the envy of the nations, is in danger of being abused to our ruin and destruction. In short, *licentiousness*, taking advantage of the lenity of the government, by degrees usurped the neglected rights of liberty ; and *faction*, connived at through the security of the times, was not content with diffusing its venom by conversation, but giving it wings from the press, it quickly flew from thence into every corner of the kingdom. By this means the ignorant and unwary were deceived by a few specious and popular pretences ; and every the least error of the

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the administration, when magnified by the false gloss they put upon it, was exhibited to the people, as a deep-concerted scheme of arbitrary power.

Not but it is probable, that many well-meaning men might, by the appearance of some supposed errors of government, be induced to think, that to keep the balance of the constitution equally poised, it would be necessary on some occasions to throw a little weight into the popular scale; and for that reason might oppose some measures, the expediency of which they either could not perceive, or had misrepresented by those who had more dark and deep designs. And I think such a proceeding before the breaking out of the great rebellion, is observed by the noble historian, to have occasioned all those fatal consequences that attended it \*. The more honest part imagined their opposition was only levelled at the measures of those in power, while the more crafty and perfidious aimed all the time at the king himself. But, blessed

\* See Lord Clarendon's History of the Great Rebellion, vol. i. p. 157, &c.

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be God, we are made wise by their example : party has now lost its very name, and happily there seems to be no other contention in this nation at present, than who shall most endeavour to strengthen the hands of the government, and protect the sacred person of our most gracious sovereign, and his royal offspring, the greatest ornament, as well as support of these kingdoms.

Nor have our religious rights been less perverted to purposes inconsistent with their well-being.—A liberty of conscience for the several denominations of christians (and from which the papists themselves have not been exempted) a liberty so agreeable to the moderate spirit of a protestant government, and that universal charity, which is the distinguished mark of our religion, has, I doubt, been indulged to those who make little conscience of any thing ; and who, as they are under no such restraints themselves, will naturally be industrious to free others from the like obligations. From hence have flowed the many corruptions in our religious principles. The *Jesuits* (a name which becomes almost blasphemy, when applied to such an unchrif-

unchristian society) finding all their attempts to extirpate the very being of our reformed religion, by their most hellish plots, and to weaken the foundations of it by their artful, but false reasoning, vain and ineffectual; contrived, as their last resort, to poison that pure fountain of living waters, which they could not by any means dry up. Accordingly they are said to have sowed the first seeds of the many different sects, which, for a century or more, like the *tares* in the parable, *choaked the good seed* of sound religion. But these proving weak and fruitless, they afterwards dressed up the too much adored idol of deism and infidelity. The form was outwardly fair and inviting. It flattered the pride, and gave large allowances to the freedom of thought; so that free-thinking soon became the peculiar distinction of a gentleman, and qualified every vain pretender to reasoning for a man of sense. Artfully levelling their aim at those points which were rather objects of our faith, than knowledge, they by this means (like their father *Socinus*) weakened the credit of the essential doctrines of the trinity, the redemption, and a final retribution of rewards and punishments. To invalidate the auth-

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## S E R M O N XXXVIII. 303

rity of the last of these, was indeed to set men loose from every tie of conscience; and whoever compares the resemblance of such tenets (especially that of disbelieving a future state of retribution) with the late invented doctrines of penance, dispensations, and masses for the dead, will easily discern them to be the offspring of the same parent. This was in effect to strike at the very root of our religion, and with the same blow to give the deepest wound to loyalty; for they well knew that the principle of fearing God, was naturally connected with that of honouring the king; and therefore they resolved to remove the cause, and the effect must necessarily cease.

And is this to be free? is this to *use our liberty as not abusing it?* or is it not rather to use it as a cloak of maliciousness, to cover those black designs which tend to entangle us again in the yoke of bondage? is it not this which has given birth to this unnatural rebellion? a monster hatched by the *Jesuits*, nourished by their *Roman catholic brethren*, supported by the factious and needy of all religions, and a few abandoned and desperate wretches of

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no religion at all : till at last pushed on with promises of assistance from our inveterate enemies of *France* and *Spain* ; it has already raised its audacious head to the crown of one of these kingdoms, and threatens havock and desolation to the others.

II. But that we may more clearly perceive what an exchange we are to expect for the invaluable blessings we have long enjoyed, let us briefly inquire, in the second place, into the principles and practice of those who have impiously presumed to disturb our peace ; a survey which, though but imperfectly taken, may be sufficient to give us an utter detestation of both ; and inspire us with a true *English* resolution to oppose the traitorous abettors of them to the utmost hazard of our lives and fortunes.

And these, whether we consider them in a civil or religious light, will be equally shocking and unchristian.

As to the civil policy of these insolent invaders, the very foundation of it is laid in fraud and perfidy. Their ruling principle,

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which gives motion to the whole complicated engine is, *that no faith is to be kept with heretics*; a name they maliciously apply to every member of the reformed religion. A maxim, which was established and decreed in one of the most solemn councils of the church of *Rome*; a maxim that has been embraced with as much zeal, as if it had been revealed by God himself, and yet practised with as much inhuman cruelty, as if promoted and suggested by the devil \*.

Besides, in those very nations where the *Roman* is not only the established, but sole religion, the dispensing power of the pope is such a prevailing piece of policy, as can either

\* This barbarous practice, equal to that of the most savage heathens, is very justly urged upon the papists, by that eminent father of the *English* reformed church, Mr. *Chillingworth*.—“ You are the men against whom the “ souls of the martyrs from under the altar cry much “ louder than against all their other persecutors together : “ who for these many ages have daily sacrificed *hecatombs* “ of innocent christians, under the name of *heretics*, to “ your blind zeal and superstition : who teach plainly, “ that you may propagate your religion whensoever you “ have power, by deposing of kings, and invasion of “ kingdoms, and think when you kill the adversaries of “ it, you do *God good service*.” Chap. v. p. 217.

set the prince above the reach of the laws, or if he presumes to be above the power of the pope too, will absolve the subjects from their allegiance, and pronounce rebellion to be a meritorious duty. The history of our own country, during its blind devotion to the see of *Rome*, will furnish us with numberless instances of this truth; when there was no other alternative, than either that the people should be slaves to the prince, or the prince a vassal, basely depending on the papal chair. Nay, though most of the catholic powers of *Europe* have in many points shaken off this insolent, oppressive yoke, yet still the principles of tyranny and arbitrary power, are by the long and habitual influence of *Romish* policy so riveted to the fundamentals of their government, that slavery is as inseparable from popery, as pain from disease, or darkness from the night.

Nor are their religious principles less dangerous, less pernicious than their civil. True it is, that the church of *Rome* at its first institution, like man at his first creation, was pure and spotless. Its doctrines were the doctrines of christianity, plain and persuasive;

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but alas ! they were soon corrupted, and made of none effect by their traditions. Not many ages had passed away before truth and simplicity were ill exchanged for pride and superstition. The ruins of the *Roman* and *Grecian* thrones, furnished materials for the papal chair ; and the once meek and lowly bishop of *Rome*, soon became the most proud, aspiring prince in *christendom*. Power thus acquired by presumption, was afterwards maintained by policy. The several contentions of princes with one another, or with their people, served as so many opportunities for the pontiff to aggrandize his authority ; for as he always procured to himself the arbitration of their differences (his pretended infallibility being in those dark ages the best qualification) so he always took care to be the chief gainer by them \*. Thus ever busied

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\* It is a very just reflection which the ingenious and learned author of our *English* history draws from these practices of the see of *Rome*, in the early ages of its greatness.—“ It was, says he, by such mutual compliances, “ when a monarch, either stung with remorse for per- “ petrated wickedness, or conscience-guided by designa- “ ing priests, deigned to ask, and the bishops of *Rome* ac- “ quiring strength from their suitors weakness, seemed to

in the intrigues of state, and little attentive to the interests of virtue and piety, the external part of their religion was heightened to much ridiculous pomp and ceremony, whilst the internal sense was explained away to such tenets as might best promote their temporal advantages, by filling the coffers of the holy father, and enriching the shrines of superstition and idolatry \*. Hence it was that vice

“ stoop to grant, that the power of the latter grew, not  
 “ in *England* only, but over all *Europe*.—Hence arose  
 “ all their claims of dispensing, confirming, and judging  
 “ in the last resort; nor is there any nation that can give  
 “ more melancholy instances of this observation than the  
 “ *English*.”

Guthrie’s Hist. of Eng. book III. p. 186.

\* The remark of the judicious author of *Ecclesiastical Polity* on this particular is very strong, and worthy notice.—“ Hence, says he, have arisen the infinite pen-  
 “ sions of their priests, the building of so many altars and  
 “ tombs, the enriching so many churches with such glo-  
 “ rious and costly gifts, the bequeathing of lands and  
 “ ample possessions to religious companies, even with  
 “ utter forgetfulness of friends, parents, wife and chil-  
 “ dren; all natural affection giving place to that desire  
 “ which men, doubtful of their own estate, have to de-  
 “ liver their souls from torment after death.—And this  
 “ that the pope might make a monopoly of, turning all  
 “ to his own gain, or to the gain of those which are his  
 “ own. Such facility they have to convert a pretended  
 “ sacrament into a revenue.” Book VI. p. 329.

became

## S E R M O N XXXVIII. 309

became useful, when indulgences were set to sale ; and *virtue* among the laity, an insignificant quality, when the loss of it might be redeemed from the superabundant stock of the clergy. Where then, O death, is thy sting ? and where, O blessed Saviour, thy satisfaction ? if men can purchase absolution in this life, and salvation in the next, for sums proportioned to the greatness of their crimes ! but what fills up the measure of all their unchristian tenets (to say nothing of many other erroneous doctrines) is that *damnable doctrine and position*, as our laws justly term it, *that princes excommunicated or deprived by the pope, as protestant princes always are, may be deposed or murthered by their subjects*: a doctrine shocking enough to mention it, but more so, when we reflect how fatally it was practised on *Henry IV. of France*; how barbarously it was executed on that great father of the protestant cause, *William, prince of Orange*, and how providentially it was escaped by his illustrious descendant king *William III. the restorer of our holy religion and liberties, and the avenger of all our wrongs.*

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When such, my brethren, are the unchristian principles, and such the horrid practices of those who are endeavouring to gain the rule over us, what have we left to hope for! or rather, what have we not to fear! shall we suffer ourselves to be amused with promises, and quieted by the vain assurances of a peaceable possession of our present properties? alas! we know too well that the promises of these men are always interpreted by their power; and that the faith they keep with heretics is no longer kept, than they have a fair occasion of breaking it. Shall we hope to enjoy the best religion in the world, pure and uncorrupted by the unwarranted doctrines of the church of *Rome*? No, the proceedings of two former popish princes will teach us what we are to expect; when some of the very people who advanced one of them to the throne, were the first that felt her persecuting spirit; and the coronation oath, and most solemn declarations of the latter were immediately cancelled by the easy absolution of a *ministerial confessor*. Nay, can we so much as flatter ourselves that our lives and families would be long safe, when we recollect that upwards of forty thousand of our protest-

## S E R M O N XXXVIII. 311

protestant brethren were within a few days barbarously butchered by these bloody-minded men in *Ireland*; and the whole constitution of king, lords and commons intended to be destroyed at one blow in *England*? And if these unheard-of cruelties were committed when treachery was obliged to wear the mask, and villainy hid itself in the veil of night, what can we expect, if God, to punish us for our sins, should permit them to be supported by the countenance and protection of a popish prince? a bigot blindly devoted to, and strictly educated in, all the superstitious zeal and cruel policy of the court of *Rome*; where each day produces a variety of murders, and the art of assassination is practised as a trade; where cowardice and cruelty go hand in hand, and revenge directs the perpetration of those crimes which itself has not courage to attempt.

But, from what has been said, I would not be thought to infer, that the principles and practice of this religion are so destructive of all moral and christian graces, that virtue and piety are no where to be found among its professors. God forbid, but there are many good, though misguided, men of this, as

well as other persuasions ! but what I would urge from hence is, that their *principles of government* are so tyrannical and arbitrary, and the policy by which they rule, so utterly inconsistent with common honesty (not to say christianity) that the will of the sovereign, enforced by the persuasions of the pope, overrules every obligation to equity, and in general deprives the subject of the protection and security of the laws,

These are indeed disagreeable truths to insist on ; nor would I presume to aggravate what christian charity rather induces me to conceal. —I know the style of the protestant preacher should be as free from acrimony and sharpness, as the spirit of his religion is from persecution ; but zeal is always a virtue when exerted in due season, and has for its sanction the greatest example that ever lived. Happy had it been for them whose blood has been already shed in defence of their country, and for them whose blood may be required for disturbing it, if we who are the *ministers of peace* did not see the sad necessity of exhorting our hearers boldly to oppose themselves to those that delight in war. But the impend-

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ing danger of the times requires it; and that will speak with more persuasion than I can do: yes, with so much persuasion, that, I am convinced, I do not see one person in this assembly *able* to wield a sword, but who is also *willing* to draw it with a true *British* courage in defence of the best of kings, and the happiest constitution in the world,

Indeed, that active spirit of loyalty which has diffused itself through men of all ranks, and that seasonable zeal for our religious and civil liberties, expressed by the members of every community among us, (except one, whose religion, not content with protection, aims at being triumphant) seems to be so plain an indication, that God has touched the hearts of the people, that I trust from hence we may begin to date our success, and apply to ourselves the prophetic words of the text, that the Almighty will soon *remove far off from us the northern army, and drive him into a land barren and desolate.* Let therefore our fears be enough to *alarm*, though not so strong as to *deject* us; let us enjoy the pleasure of observing that every true christian now, like those of the primitive times, from whom we derive

derive the purity of our faith, are all associated together with one accord, and have all things common, in support of the common cause.

Not but there is too much cause to suspect that many false brethren, many foreign, as well as domestic emissaries, are dispersed in several parts of this kingdom; traitors, who, as the psalmist expresses it, *sit lurking in the secret places, and privily lie in wait to catch the poor*; to allure the people of weak minds, and desperate conditions into the net of disaffection, and to sound the inclinations and dispositions of the places through which they pass.—It is an observation of the royal preacher, that *a violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way which is not good*; but it is his advice too, *My son, if sinners entice, consent thou not; walk not thou in the path with them, for their feet run to evil and make haste to shed blood*. It is indeed a sad instance of the base depravity of the heart of man, that any one in this happy land of liberty should presume so loudly to express their disaffection, when they know full well that the least whisper of discontent would prove fatal to them.

them under that slavish and tyrannical government, to which they want to reduce us. But if there really be such abandoned creatures among us, may their greatest punishment (and I doubt not but it will prove great enough) be disappointment and detestation wherever they come: may they every where be mortified with the ocular demonstration of as universal a spirit of loyalty as any nation ever boasted of; and lastly, may they see and believe, that the life and fortune of every gallant *Englishman* has now no other object, (no object of pleasure, none of profit) than to defend his king and country, and one another, against the implacable attempts of *France* and *Spain*, and the insolent attempts of a popish pretender.

In a cause so just, to which many of us have sworn fidelity, and to which all are desirous of associating themselves in the most solemn manner, we have just reason to place pious confidence in the favour and assistance of that almighty power by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice: and as his creative hand has divided this nation from the rest of the earth, has founded it upon the seas.

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*seas, and prepared it upon the floods, if we are, as we seem to be, united among ourselves, the deep waters of the proud shall not go over us, nor all the kingdoms of the world, with his protection on our side, be able to prevail against us.*

## SERMON XXXIX.

THE TRUE CAUSES OF NATIONAL  
HAPPINESS.

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PSALM CXLIV. 15.

*Happy is that people that is in such a case ; yea  
happy is that people whose God is the Lord.*

Or, as it is in the older version,

*Happy are the people that are in such a case :  
yea blessed are the people who have the Lord  
for their God.*

THERE is nothing more difficult to ascertain than our notions of human happiness ; because they change with circumstances, and vary with the desires that want to be gratified : and though the happiness of any particular person may, in a great measure,

sure, depend upon himself, (as there is little else wanting to acquire it, than a temper and disposition suited to the circumstances of life in which he is placed;) yet when we pronounce a whole nation happy, we must clearly perceive a concurrence of so many, and so great, events; as could hardly be accomplished by human means alone, without the assistance and direction of that supreme Being *whose kingdom ruleth over all*; and who not only delighteth in the prosperity of his servants; but, *when he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?* whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only \*.

If we apply this observation to the happy occasion of this day's solemnity, how high should we rise in our expressions of thankfulness, to bear a due proportion to the mercies and deliverances we have received: especially when the authority and example of our sovereign excites us to this duty; when the general observance of nations provokes our emulation; and the God of peace himself is present, and we humbly hope propitious, to those praises and thanksgivings we have now

\* Job xxxiv. 29.

offered

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offered unto him, for mercifully delivering us, in his good time, from a tedious, expensive, and destructive war. It remains only, to complete the reasonable service of this joyful festival, that I recommend to your attention some further considerations on this subject; principally drawn from the pious writings of one, who had equal experience of the calamities of war, and the blessings of peace, *the royal psalmist*. It was his peculiar happiness, not only to be empowered to execute the wonderful works of God, but inspired also to celebrate them: accordingly his compositions are as much distinguished by the *praises*, as his life was by the *mercies*, of the Almighty. The sublime and beautiful psalm, from whence the text is taken, will, of itself, justify the truth of this observation. Whatever circumstances of his life gave occasion to it, whether some signal advantage gained over his natural, and implacable enemies the *Philistines*; those strange children whose mouth talked of vanity, and whose right hand was a right hand of falsehood\*: or whether it was intended to shew forth his grateful sense of the divine assistance, in reducing his disaffected and re-

\* Psalm cxliv. 8.

bellious

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bellious subjects to their obedience, implied in the words, *who subdueth my people that is under me*\*.—Whether, I say, one, or both, of these great events produced this great particular composition—this at least is obvious, that he not only ascribes his own safety and advantages in war to the power of that almighty being, *the Lord his strength, who taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight*†; but relies also on the divine mercy and goodness for the future prosperity of those kingdoms, over which his providence had appointed him to preside. This he makes consist in a numerous and well-ordered offspring, in a plentiful supply of the necessaries and conveniences of life; in a security from foreign invasions, and a prevention of intestine tumults. *Bow thy heavens, O Lord, says he, and come down, touch the mountains and they shall smoke*‡; i. e. Let the happy influence of thy providence descend upon these kingdoms; touch the proud hearts of my aspiring and ambitious adversaries with a desire of peace, and all their lofty thoughts shall vanish like smoke: Then will the happy time come, (as it follows in the verses preceding the text) *That our sons*

\* Psalm cxliv. 2.

+ Ibid. 1.

‡ Ibid. 5.

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## SERMON XXXIX. 321

may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be polished after the similitude of a palace. That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store; that our sheep may bring forth thousands, and ten thousands in our streets: that our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out, and no complaining in our streets\*. A people distinguished by such prosperous circumstances as these, may justly be pronounced a *happy people*; which the pious author does very emphatically in the words before us: *Happy is that people that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.*

As, therefore, these strong and expressive characters of national happiness, are, upon this solemn occasion, a very proper subject for our attention; I shall beg leave to enlarge upon them in the order here laid down: and as they seem to include such advantages as can only be derived from a state of tranquillity, we must naturally be led to praise, and adore the goodness of God, for putting us in a condition to procure these blessings, by the means

\* Psalm cxlv. 12—14.

of a just and honourable, and, if we make a proper use of it, a lasting and advantageous peace.

The first object then of the royal psalmist, in a state of tranquillity, is to implore the Creator, and preserver of all mankind for the fruitful increase, and well-ordered discipline of his people; that their sons might be as plants grown up in their youth, and their daughters as the polished corners of a temple.—Endowed with all the fine abilities of a statesman, in conjunction with those of a great, and experienced commander, he knew that the power, and greatness of a kingdom was not to be estimated by the vast extent of its dominions; but by the number, and strength of its inhabitants. These, as they must necessarily be diminished by the havock, and corrupted by the almost unavoidable irregularities, attending on war; could only be restored, and modelled by the good order, and policy, which form one of the principal blessings of peace. When the father of his family, happily disengaged from the honourable, but hazardous attendance on his military function, is at leisure to look to the pleasure

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ing duties of a social and domestic life; and the children, no longer fretted with anxious fears for the safety of him, on whom depends their own welfare, can procure such advantages from his bounty, as they will improve from his example, and instruction. It is then our sons will best grow up, and be trained under the hand of care as the young plants: and our daughters, under the eye of prudence, be as the polished corners of a temple; adorned with all the graces of purity and devotion.

The progress, and culture of the human powers are here aptly compared to those of the vegetable kind; or the stone taking its form, and proportion from the ingenious hand of the sculptor. It would be but a very imperfect wish for a numerous progeny to flourish only in health, and vigour of body; endowments in common with mere animal nature: the skilful hand of discipline is to be applied to their early and tender state, to train them into order and regularity; to bend, and subdue the stubborn shoots of passion; to prune away the luxuriances of immoderate desire; to graft upon them the steady principles of piety to God, loyalty to their King, and love

to their country. Thus disposed and cultivated, the human plants will bloom with all the sweetness of *innocence*; and, in time, produce the lovely fruit of every *virtue*: whilst the venerable father of his people, surrounded by the flourishing sons of liberty and valour, remains unruffled at the popular blast of domestic faction; unshaken by the menacing storms of foreign invasion.

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Again; as the demands for the necessities, and conveniences of life must rise in proportion to the increase of the people, the psalmist very properly subjoins a petition to the gracious giver of all things, that, *our garners may be full and plenteous with all manner of store; that our sheep may bring forth thousands, and ten thousands in our streets.* The more numerous any people are, the more they see the necessity, as well as furnish the means, for the plentiful accommodations of life. Agriculture, and commerce, are the principal sources from whence all the supports, and even superfluities, of life are derived: but these must be supposed to fail much of their wonted success, whilst the watchful projects of an enemy will be ever aiming to intercept

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the views of the one ; and the destruction, or avocations, of war, must take off many useful hands from both. Indeed the simple and bounded desires of the *Jewish* nation at this period, had not yet opened those gainful views of traffic, in which they afterwards made so considerable a progress. Their attention was chiefly directed to the primæval arts of pasturage and tillage ; but so dignified by the personal application of the most illustrious among their tribes, that indolence itself must be roused by the force of such high example ; till their *vallies* on every side would stand so thick with corn, and their flocks and their herds be so multiplied ; as not only to fill their garners with plenty, but enable them also to exchange the superfluity of their own produce, for the various supplies of more commercial nations.

But with respect to ourselves, we are more particularly interested in the success of this petition. That good Providence, who *bath* determined the bounds of the several habitations of men \*, hath, as it were, with his own right hand pointed out the natural object of our

\* Acts xvii. 25.

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employment; by making the very ocean, which *circumscribes* our country, the happy means of uniting it to the most distant limits of the earth. To enable us to execute this wonderful work, he hath particularly blessed us with a staple commodity, the improvement whereof is equally advantageous to ourselves, and necessary to the rest of the world. Happy as we are in this invaluable treasure, (which, the true lovers of their country, will look upon as the property of the public) every *feece* should be secured by as watchful a guard as was that of fabulous antiquity. To this end, the wisdom of the legislature have ranked every *fraudulent alienation* of it among crimes of the deepest dye; and given up those worst of enemies, to the rigour of justice, when they could not be reclaimed by more gentle methods. There is therefore a peculiar propriety in our joining with the royal psalmist, *That our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets:* especially, as by the rich returns they will procure us, *our garners will be full and plenteous,* affording all manner of store: affording as well the necessary supports of life, to strengthen man's heart;

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heart; as the more refined accommodations of it, to make him of a cheerful countenance.

I should not here pass by that part of the petition, wherein the pious author prays, *that our oxen may be strong to labour*; or, as the passage is perhaps more properly translated, *that our cattle may be fruitful, and not cast their burdens* \*. Or, shall I not by this, call forth such painful reflections as ought not to mix with the pleasing sense of this joyful festival? The heavy calamity which we, together with other nations, have long laboured under, is not the necessary attendant on war; but the happy removal of it will greatly enhance the *blessings of peace*: and therefore, since it has hitherto eluded the art of the most *skillful*, and the precaution of the most *prudent*, means; we must at last fix our only hopes of relief on an humble acknowledgement, that *the hand of the Lord is upon the cattle* †; and that when such judgments as these are abroad, *the inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness*. If our behaviour be

\* Voyez projet d'une nouvelle version Françoise de la Bible, par Le Cene, p. 410.      † Deut. ix. 3.

duly regulated by this sense of things, then will the Lord be intreated for the land; will bless this part of our *victuals* with increase, and suffer not our cattle to decay \*.

But further; even plenty and abundance lose their power to bless, when not secured by a peaceable and unmolested enjoyment. The pious monarch therefore concludes his petition to the author of peace and concord, *that there may be no breaking in, nor going out; and no complaining in our streets.* The sudden irruption of an ambitious nation, and the defection of a seditious discontented people, are here implied by the simple expressions of *breaking in, and going out.* The good king David had fully experienced the distress of both these political evils. His insolent, and implacable enemies the *Philistines*, whose ambition could only be supported by their perfidy; (*for their right hand was a right hand of falsehood*) had often broke through the most solemn engagements, to seize on any opportunity of attacking him at a disadvantage: and the restless, capricious temper of his own subjects, (often rebellious without reason; and disaffected be-

\* Psalm cxxii. 38.

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cause they would be displeased) had rendered the regal dignity equally burthensome, and precarious. So *burthensome*, that, literally speaking, it was at best but *a weight of glory*: so *precarious*, that it was not till God had subdued his people that was under him, that he could say, *do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?*

We need not make a particular application of what has been observed on this head: the annals of all nations will teach us, that popular discontents, blown up by misleading arts into civil distraction, have rather been a general evil in all governments, than the misfortune only of a few. Good or ill conduct in a state is commonly estimated by the different turn and temper of the people.—*Success*, with some, sufficiently justifies every measure: *disappointment*, with others, converts even wisdom itself into ignorance, and folly. The interests too of mankind vary so much from each other, as to make the whole irreconcileable: and any obstruction to private views, is too apt to make men blind and insensible to the public welfare.—But though the seeds of discontent, which generally spring up into faction,

sion, be said to lurk in every government; yet they certainly take deepest root in the best. No wonder then it should be the production of a British soil: where the temperature of our constitution is not so rigorous as to check it in the blade; or rather, the indulgent spirit of our liberty tends to promote its growth. But yet, why should it be thought that a weak, unavailing faction rather adds to the vigour, than obstructs the operations, of government? The wisest men hath told us, that *the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water*\*. Small as the vent at first may appear, it will insensibly widen its way; till the mounds and fences of authority may be broken down; and then no one knows how far the inundation may spread. We have seen the neglected springs of faction increase at last to a torrent of rebellion: but, blessed be God, we have also seen those deep waters of the proud, which threatened to overwhelm us, stopped in their impetuous progress; and afterwards producing this happy effect, in common with natural floods, that though they broke in upon a land of liberty, they caused it also to yield a more plentiful harvest of loyalty. Thus

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what appeared to be the chastisement of heaven, is found by the event to have been intended as a mercy. *Happy art thou O people! who is like unto thee, saved by the Lord; the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! thine enemies have been found liars unto thee, and thou hast trod upon their high places\**.

Now, should it occur to any one, that many, nay most, of these characters of national happiness, drawn from the plan laid down by the royal psalmist, may be evidently found in a review of our own circumstances; yet why should this consideration render us less sensible of the blessings of peace? should it not rather point out additional motives to praise, and adore the goodness of God, for preserving to us the enjoyment of so much happiness, during the course of a tedious and expensive war? the continuance of it could not be justified upon *christian principles*; and the knowledge of the event was beyond the discernment of *human policy*. Even a more favourable crisis, (which was more than we could be sure of) must have increased the

\* Deut. xxxiii. 29.

*burthens,*

*burthen*, and multiplied the *losses* of many private persons; and perhaps additional incumbrances might not have been balanced by our public acquisitions. Add to this, that war in itself, is productive both of *natural* and *moral* evils. It often perverts the powers of *reason*, to facilitate the means of *oppression*: turns sincerity into guile; open dealing into stratagem. It multiplies the shafts of *death*, and gluts the *grave* with repeated victories; tramples upon the beauties of the creation, and spreads ruin and desolation over the face of the earth. It is indeed accounted one of those just judgments in the hand of the Almighty, with which he sometimes visits the nations: but it is rather permitted by him, as the effect of their own ungovernable lusts and passions; and, to convince them of their pernicious tendency; than as an act of his over-ruling power, and vindictive punishment. When the unsearchable ends of his providence are served by it, and men are sufficiently plagued because of their offences, he then maketh wars to cease in all the world: he turneth the hearts of princes as the rivers of water; restrains the violence of their passions with the calm suggestions of right reason; and

and speaks to their hearts in the language of omnipotence itself : *Be still, then, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, and I will be exalted upon the earth*\*. To what else can we ascribe that sudden impulse to a pacific disposition among the several contending powers in the late war? to what can we impute the voluntary concessions of *some*, and the speedy adjustment of the respective claims of *all*? but to the secret, overruling influence of the God of peace; *who spake, and it was done; who commanded, and they were obedient unto his word?*

Should some few among us still be of opinion, that, because they saw us possessed of many national advantages, superior to those of our enemies, we were, therefore, able to prosecute the war with *vigour*, and conclude it with greater *success*: yet these should learn to acquiesce in the general sense of good, and considerate people; to be thankful for the present security of our national blessings, lest they should too soon be exposed to the hazard of a more unprosperous issue. If they saw our youth so grow up, and our quiver so

full of them, that we needed not be ashamed to speak with our enemies in the gate: if they saw us happy in a numerous royal progeny, which may increase the future glory, as much as they add to the present lustre, of these kingdoms: if, notwithstanding the great consumption of war, the nation be yet so populous, as to be able to stock a more uncultivated land, and transport the *British* name into distant regions, where they may build them a city to dwell in: we ought to remember, that it is God alone who multiplieth his people exceedingly, and that children are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord.—If again, our garners have been so full and plenteous with all manner of store, that we could not only supply the wants of our allies, but also generously relieve the necessities of our very enemies; we should praise the Lord for this his goodness, and gratefully acknowledge, that though we sow the land, it is he only that yieldeth fruits of increase.—If lastly, there was no breaking in, nor going out, and no complaining in our streets, but what only served to awaken us to a sense of our happiness, and to unite our hands, and hearts against those who wanted to disturb it; we should ever thankfully

fully confess, that it is the Lord also who maketh men to be of one mind in an house, and knitteth the bands of society together, so that they shall not easily be broken.

Whether these extraordinary instances of divine favour (for such they ought to be accounted, if compared with the circumstances of the nations around us) are to be ascribed to the justice of our cause, and our honour, and generosity in supporting it; is what we rather humbly hope, than presume to assert. But if the maintenance of the rights and privileges of a free people, or a performance of the solemn faith plighted to our allies, be deemed equitable motives; it is as certain that we entered into the war with *justice*, as that we supported it with *generosity*. It was not with a view of enlarging our own dominions; these were bounded by contentment: it was confessedly to secure those of our allies; for they were grasped at by the hand of ambition. We used no unjustifiable arts to increase the havock of war; true valour despairs such ungenerous practices: no unconstitutional methods of providing for the charge of it; our bounty at home was as

much admired as our courage in the field; and the vigour of both was equally felt and acknowledged by our adversaries.—And if victory was less constant to us by land; (though there she balanced all our loss by crowning the royal banners with a most important, and ever-memorable success) she seemed however delighted to side with us in a more unstable element; where the wealth, accruing from our naval triumphs, could only be exceeded by the glorious achievements by which it was acquired.

But it will not become us to give way to the impulse of national vanity. Whatever advantages we have gained, or whatever dangers we have escaped, should be ascribed to the proper author; and improved by a subsequent behaviour. If *pride, ambition, and impatience*, generally prove the fore-runners of war; *humility, temperance and contentment* should be the constant attendants on peace. These will teach us to compose our passions which have been exasperated, and inflamed by a long series of violence and contention: to restrain that immoderate spirit of luxury and extravagance so prevalent among us: to

regulate our expences, not by the fashionable vanity of people in a supposed equality of condition; but by an impartial estimate of our own real circumstances. It is, I hope, rather a strong presumption of the collective wealth of the people in general, than of the particular folly of individuals; that whilst the public was maintaining a foreign war with almost *unexampled*, but *necessary*, appointments; the high gratifications of private life should abate nothing of their demands; but rather rise still higher upon people of every rank and condition among us.—But if the entanglements of pleasure, and inattention to affairs, have long kept the accompt open, and unstated; it is now time to inspect, and balance it with a most accurate exactness: to consider how much we are become debtors to prudence; and to make due allowance for the share we must take in the public incumbrances: and, if we have any true love for our country, any just regard for the maintenance of its credit; or any grateful sense of the blessings we enjoy under our happy establishment; now is the time to act as people entirely convinced; that *unanimity* in our counsels, and *oeconomy* in our conduct, are the

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only stays that can support the weight of our present burthens, and secure the freedom and independency of these kingdoms from the future attempts of any ambitious and aspiring nation.

But still one thing is needful; and we must remember to chuse the better part, because that is connected with the whole of our happiness: for blessed is the people who have the Lord for their God. The royal psalmist was justly led to this conclusion, as well from the repeated evidences he himself had of the signal interposition of Providence in favour of his people; as from their being distinguished by the only revelation of the divine will till then vouchsafed to mankind.—But a much happier people are we in such a case: we have the Lord for our God; not in the terrible denunciation of judgments, or the rigid ceremonial of the Jewish Dispensation: not in the corrupted traditions, and uncharitable censures of the Romish faith; but in the pure, unalterable voice of truth, and the unbounded spirit of benevolence.—We have the Lord for our God; not in the tortures of an inquisition to rack the body: not in the artful sophistry

of human refinements to perplex the *mind*; but in a truly christian liberty of conscience, as to the *mode* of worship, and the plain direction of revelation as to the *spirit* of it. The whole tendency of the precepts of our religion is directed to exalt our national happiness; for the duties of *justice*, *temperance*, and *peaceableness* are certainly productive of it: and, to the christian graces which the same religion displays to us, is annexed the promise of eternal happiness; for our *faith* will direct, our *hope* will animate, and our *charity* (the unparalleled charity of the present age) will recommend our endeavours towards the attainment of it.

Let nothing then, come in competition with the absolute certainty, or even the bare possibility, of these high claims of piety and virtue. Let not affluence and plenty, instead of furnishing occasions of enriching the mind with valuable acquirements, relax, and soften it into a most criminal indolence: let not indigence and pain, whether real or pretended, instead of rousing the powers of the soul to procure a suitable remedy, have recourse to nothing but amusement; which, while it

seems to protract, is really hastening the approach of, misery. If pleasure must have its *days* of vanity, let the pursuit be rational and limited; but let piety also have its *hours* of devotion. Let us, at least, allow it that portion of time which both divine and human laws have assigned it: for then we may hope that our *piety* may *justify* our *pleasure*; as a due compliance with their respective claims, will make the one *innocent*, and the other *amiable*. In a word, let us seriously consider how much our very being, as a people, depends upon an active observance of the rules of virtue and religion. These, by the natural order of things, must greatly contribute to support the power, and extend the influence, of any nation. They promote good order, fair dealing, and submission to the laws at home: they procure respect, enlarge our credit, and recommend our alliance abroad.—Even the *nations that knew not God*, (in the *times of ignorance which he winked at*,) by their strict adherence to the natural dictates of virtue, and the *law of morality written in their hearts*, raised themselves to such a pitch of glory as would be a reproach to more enlightened times; had they not also left us an example,

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ample, that the downfal of their *power* was principally occasioned by the dissolution of their *manners*. We are yet, blessed be God, more brave and powerful than to be ruined by other people; and, I trust, more prudent and wise than to be undone by our own follies. The privileges of a *British* subject are too valuable to be wantonly thrown away: his property is secured by *justice*, his liberty by *law*, and his religion by *truth*. And, I may venture to affirm, that, as our liberty was never fully *recognized*, till our religion was thoroughly reformed; so, whilst we stand fast in the *constitutional* liberty procured for us by our fore-fathers; and in the *spiritual* liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free; whilst we have the Lord for our God, whose service is perfect freedom, we shall not be entangled again in the yoke of bondage \*.

\* Gal. iv. 1.

THE HISTORY OF THE  
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

BY  
JOHN TRUMBULL,  
LAWYER AND HISTORIAN,  
OF NEW YORK,  
AND  
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT,  
AND MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY  
AND THE AMERICAN PHILOLOGICAL  
AND HISTORICAL SOCIETIES;  
AND  
PUBLISHER OF THE AMERICAN  
HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS; AND  
EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN  
HISTORICAL JOURNAL; AND  
MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN  
ACADEMY IN LONDON,  
AND OF THE BRITISH  
ACADEMY; AND  
MEMBER OF THE  
AMERICAN  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY;  
AND  
MEMBER OF THE  
AMERICAN  
PHOTOGRAPHIC  
SOCIETY;

## SERMON XL.

## THE EXAMPLE OF CORNELIUS.

ACTS X, 4.

— Thy prayers, and thine alms, are come up for a memorial before God.

THAT no religious or moral action escapes the observance of the all-seeing eye of God, is a truth deducible from reason, and firmly established by revelation. It is this which animates us with a pious confidence to implore the God of all comfort for a blessing on ourselves, and that excites in us the amiable disposition of doing good to others. To weaken the force of this persuasion, is to strike at the very foundation of all religious worship; and, at the same time, to leave morality, even that part of it which christianity has guarded with the strongest sanctions, no

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other support than the natural fitness, or propriety, of the action: a support by far too weak to withstand the passions, or fix the wavering disposition of human nature, to a steady and uniform point of virtue. Well, therefore, have the scriptures taught us to believe, that the all-wise Author of our being is intimately present with our most secret actions, attentive to the *prayer* that goeth not out of feigned lips, and mindful of the *alms* bestowed by a cheerful, and grateful giver.

But here it may be proper to observe, that an evident, or sensible testimony, of the divine approbation of human actions, is not to be expected, but when great and extraordinary occasions require it: The case of *Cornelius, the Centurion,* is to be considered in this light. The apostles, and first preachers of christianity, in many particulars of their mission, were left to the occasional directions of the holy spirit. As yet they understood not that *God had to the Gentiles also granted repentance unto life* \*. They had too contracted notions of the unlimited views of the Gospel Dispensation, and thought it was to be cir-

\* *Acts xi. 18.*

cumscripted

cumscribed by the narrow boundary of the Jewish pale. Here then was an occasion that called for the interposition of Providence, to correct their mistaken notions of the divine oeconomy. Accordingly St. Peter was instructed in a vision, that God was no respecter of persons \* ; and Cornelius, whose piety and charity were distinguished by an extraordinary proof of the divine approbation, was, at the same time, directed by an angel to offer himself as the first-fruits of the conversion of the Gentiles ; whence the world might learn this comfortable truth, that *in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is to be accepted with him* †.

From this portion of scripture, permit me now to collect, and recommend to your attention and imitation, the character and behaviour of this truly pious and good man : for an example so amiable as that of this good Centurion, has a peculiar claim to our regard on the present occasion ; as it will not only shew us the necessary connexion that should always subsist between religious and moral goodness, between the benevolence of the

\* Acts x. 3.

+ Ibid. ver. 35.

man,

man, and the piety of the christian ; but, by forming this charitable work of ours on the same wise plan, it will afford us the well-grounded hope that our *prayers* also, and our *alms* may go up for a memorial before God.

Now in the account which the sacred historian has left us of Cornelius, he confines himself chiefly to his religious and moral character ; excepting this particular, that he was a *Centurion of the band called the Italian Band*: but whether he was the Centurion who had seen, and been benefited by, *the wondrous works which Jesus did* ; or he who acknowledged his divinity, when he saw all nature sympathize with the Son of God in the agony of his crucifixion, is rather to be conjectured, than asserted. However it is highly probable, that he was one of those many Gentiles who had abjured the impious superstition of the pagan deities, for the more rational worship of the only true God, the *God of Israel*: for the evangelist records of him, that he was a *devout man, and one that feared God* \* ; an expression, which, in the language of scripture, is often used to distinguish the proselytes of

\* Acts x. 2.

the gate ; or such converts to *judaism* as were allowed to perform their solemn acts of devotion in the outer court of the temple ; but, by the rigid policy of the Jewish government, were not admitted to the greater privileges of that religion. But *Cornelius* was here upon firmer ground, than if he had rested on those systems of moral duty, which were raised only on the loose, unsettled, foundation of human opinion ; often shaken by the discordant precepts of the philosophers themselves, and seldom proof against the impetuous assaults of human passions. He had now a rule of life for his guide, which bore the internal marks of divine wisdom : so that, by repeated meditations on the inspired truths of *Moses* and the *prophets*, he could form the most just and sublime conceptions of the great Creator, and governor of the universe. And, as prayer is that exercise of the mind best fitted to express the hope and resignation of frail, dependent, beings ; as it is a natural act of homage to the supreme Lord of all things for the blessings we enjoy, and of humiliation for the evils we justly suffer ; he accordingly omitted no opportunity of prostrating himself before the throne of mercy : punctually observing  
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the stated returns of devotion enjoined by the Jewish church, implied in the expression; he *prayed to God always*\*. Not content also with practising this regular course of piety himself, he took care to impress the same religious sentiment on every member of his family; for it is likewise said of him, that he *feared God with all his house*†. Nay, he seems to have endeavoured, and not without effect, to instil into the minds of the soldiers under him, a proper sense of religious obligation: and it is not improbable, that he took them by turns about his person, in order that the force of his instructions, added to the amiableness of his own example, might produce the same conformity to a religion, which they observed in a military discipline.—This, I say, is no ill-grounded supposition: as we find that the message dispatched to St. Peter, in obedience to the commands of the angel, was intrusted to *two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually*‡.

Now a manner of life so strictly conformable to the obligations of religion, we may

\* Acts x. 2.    † Ibid.    ‡ Ibid. ver. 7.

justly

justly conclude was not deficient in the practice of moral duties. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*\*; because right apprehensions of his infinite power and justice are the best preservatives against vice and folly: but the more pleasing contemplation of the mercy and goodness of God, will naturally lead men to the imitation of the same perfections, by disposing them to acts of justice and beneficence to their fellow-creatures. If we inquire how far *Cornelius* was influenced by these considerations, the sacred historian will inform us, that he was a *just man*, and one that *gave much alms to the people*. And indeed had he not been *charitable*, he could not have been pronounced *just*: for can he be called a *just man*, that withholds from the poverty of his neighbour what he can easily spare from his own occasions, or *when it is in the power of his hand to give it?*

But the beneficence of *Cornelius* appears to have been neither sparing in the allowance, nor limited in the distribution. He did not deal out such a scanty pittance, as was barely enough to support the sense of misery; nor did he

\* Ps. cxi. 18.  
confine

confine his bounty to one or two necessitous objects : but like the rain which falleth on a thirsty and dry land, where no water is, the showers of his beneficence descended on all around him, for he gave much alms to the people. And it greatly enhances the merit of this good man, that, being a stranger in the place, without any particular connection with the inhabitants ; but casually stationed, as we may suppose, wherever the intention of his employment was best answered, he should nevertheless admit all the needy and unfortunate to a share of his affection, and place himself in the relation of a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow. Nay it is a convincing proof, that there was something peculiarly amiable in the conduct and behaviour of this good Centurion, since though he was a *Roman*, a name the most offensive to the *Jews*, for having subdued their country ; a *soldier* too, and as such appointed to keep them in subjection ; quartered also among the *Sumaritans*, a people hated by them on the score of their religious differences ; yet the personal virtues of the man were so much superior to all these prejudices, as to procure him the universal applause, recorded by the evange-

evangelist, that he was *a man of good report among all the nation of the Jews*\*. But what is the honour of men, in comparison of that which cometh from God? The zeal and un-dissimbled virtue of Cornelius was approved in heaven itself: for his *prayers*, and his *alms* went up for a *memorial before God*; and their united sincerity brought an *angel* down, to direct him what he should further do to inherit eternal life.

See then at one view, of what a glorious assemblage of religious and moral qualities the character of this good man was composed: and, as the picture bears a near resemblance, take it as delineated by the very apostle who was the providential instrument of his conversion to christianity—*Giving all diligence, he added to his faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness CHARITY* †.

As therefore this of Cornelius is one of the many instructive examples recorded for our

\* Acts x. 22.

† 1 Peter i. 5—7.

imita-

imitation, let us *follow his steps*. In order to which, let us proceed to draw such reflections from the conduct and behaviour of the good Centurion, as may not only excite us to that *labour of love* we are now called upon to perform; but also direct us how to render our charity acceptable to God, that it may be attended with his blessing on those helpless objects for whom it is solicited.

Now the general observation, arising from our review of this character, is, that there is a reasonable, and necessary connexion between religious and moral duties; between acts of piety to God, and works of charity to our fellow-creatures. The joint force of these obligations appears in the very temper and spirit of christianity, and is the principal lesson either taught, or implied in almost every page of the gospel. It is, indeed, the very form wherein the glad tidings of our redemption were proclaimed by the melodious voice of angels; for they joined *Glory to God, and good-will towards men* \*, in the same heavenly composition. It even sums up the whole of our religion in this short, but comprehen-

\* Luke ii. 14.

five rule, to love the Lord our God with all our heart; and our neighbour as ourselves. Agreeably to these inseparable branches of duty, the first public service, that was celebrated by the apostles, was closed with a charitable collection for the relief of the poor disciples; when distribution was made to every one according as he had need \*. A practice so conformable to the dictates of reason, to the precepts of religion, and the obligations of gratitude, hath been wisely adopted into the most solemn office of our church; when the purity of our hearts, being accompanied by the offering of our hands, we are encouraged to hope that our *prayers* and supplications will be heard, and our *alms* and oblations *had in remembrance in the sight of God.*

And indeed it is scarce possible for those who seriously attend on the public offices of our religion, not to be affected by that spirit of universal benevolence which is displayed in the manner, and enlivens every part, of our holy service. For here *the rich and poor meet together before God to implore his mercy, and acknowledge their dependance on one com-*

\* Acts ii. 45.

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mon Lord who is the maker of them all. Every act of devotion they join in, every prayer which they repeat, is offered up for the common benefit, and includes the wish of all possible happiness to the whole race of mankind: and whilst a sense of gratitude calls forth the thankfulness of the wealthy for the good things they enjoy, a sense of justice will dispose them to bestow some share on the indigent and unfortunate. From these different dispensations of Providence arises the various, but universal, state of probation in which we are here placed: that whilst they leave room for the exercise of such good qualities as are peculiarly fitted to our respective stations; whilst moderation and benevolence form the glory of the rich; and contentment, sobriety, and industry, are the humble ornaments of the poor; these different dispensations may finally produce an equality of virtue, and consequently of happiness, out of the present disparity of our condition.

Consider it then in this light, and public worship is naturally productive of public happiness: for as religion establishes good order, and a due subordination of power and station,  
upon

upon the irresistible will of God, in whose hand is the sole disposal of all things; so the same religion instructs us, that mutual benevolence, and mutual justice, are the best cement to preserve that good order unbroken, and undisturbed. That the necessary *wants* therefore of some may be supplied out of the abundance of others, the rich are here exhorted to be ready to give, and glad to distribute; whilst the poor also, to use the words of the apostle on a similar occasion, *by the experiment of this ministration, will be led to glorify God for such a liberal distribution towards them*\*.

But still, that we may not proceed on wrong principles, it must be observed, that the obligation to benevolence, or charity, which is the strongest proof of benevolence, must either be founded on a conformity to the will of God, as directed by his unerring wisdom, and illustrated in various dispensations of his goodness; or it must be the mere result of compassion, and affection for our fellow creatures. The natural emotions of tenderness, and sensibility, for the distress of others, are

\* 2 Cor. ix. 13.

indeed an evident proof that the allwise Author of our being designed them as the springs, or impelling power, to the benevolent affections; and when the hand is always ready to obey the impulse of a good heart, so far we answer the intention of Providence in that part of the human frame. But then this is to act rather from a natural, than moral, principle.—To entitle our charity to all its merit, we must derive the obligation from a nobler source; from the pure and inexhaustible fountain of life, and health, and all things; from God who wills the universal happiness of created beings; and who hath taught us from his works, and from his word, that we then only answer the end of our creation, and act up to the dignity of our nature, when we co-operate with this boundless benevolence of the Deity, by endeavouring to alleviate the pains, to supply the wants, and to promote the virtue and welfare, of all within the reach of our influence and ability. From this principle it was that *Cornelius* dispensed his bounty to the objects around him. *He feared God, and therefore, gave much alms to the people.* What he had received from the goodness, he knew must be accounted for to the justice, of

God: and as his piety produced his charity; so his charity reflected a grace and lustre on his piety.

It should seem therefore that religion and benevolence are so intimately connected, that together they must stand or fall: and that virtue, national virtue, their lovely offspring, must droop, or flourish, in proportion to the care and culture bestowed upon them. And yet, if we were to form a judgment of our *faith by our works*, if the *tree* is to be *known by its fruits*, should we not conclude, that religion, *the vine which God's right hand hath planted, hath taken deep root among us, and filled our land?* That benevolence also *hath stretched out her branches unto the sea, and her boughs unto the river*\*; so that the poor find a shelter under her hospitable shade; and, to reverse the metaphor of the psalmist, *all they that go by, all the destitute, afflicted, and helpless, that offer themselves, may pluck of her grapes, and be refreshed, and relieved, by the annual fruits of charity which she produces.*—What shall we say then? That the spirit of religion fades and languishes, whilst

\* Psalm lxxx.

that of charity is daily flourishing and yielding fruits of increase? God forbid!—That vice in general is too prevalent among us cannot be denied: but we must not therefore despair of virtue, because that would be to discourage its progress. Great and glaring disorders in the moral world, like those in the natural, are still seen with horror, and related with astonishment: and the general abhorrence that impious actions meet with, is some proof of the respect which is yet paid to virtue and goodness. It might also be considered, that many effects of vice, like those of an unruly torrent, mark their way with havock and desolation; and, as such, will be much more noticed, and make more noise in the world, than the gentle stream of virtue, which glides along in a regular and orderly course, doing good insensibly, and without ostentation. We have also a very apposite rule of judgment left us by our blessed Saviour, that, when *iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*\*—But let not frail and fallible man presume to estimate the proportion between public virtue, and public depravity: as the evidence for each can only be distinctly seen

\* Matt. xxiv. 12.

by the eyes of the Lord, which are in every place, beholding the evil and the good\*. Better will it become us, with equal humility and truth, to acknowledge, that there is always wickedness enough in the world to call for every possible method of reformation: and it is a real satisfaction to all good men, to find that their ardent wishes in this respect, have, in some measure, been answered by the zealous endeavours of those who are vested with proper authority for this salutary end. So that though the floods of ungodly men, which make us afraid, cannot at once be stopped; yet the repeated efforts of power conducted by wisdom, and exerted with resolution, may, and, it is to be hoped, will, be able to repair the fences of virtue that are broken down, and reduce the dissolute within the bounds of order and sobriety.

In the mean time, we cannot be better employed to all the purposes of national virtue, than in such good works as that which now engages our attention. To what height popular depravity might have risen, but for the many charitable foundations that of late years

\* Prov. xv. 3.

have been established among us, no man can presume to judge. But certain it is, that the charitable provisions of the present age, are almost as various as either the spiritual, or bodily, infirmities of human nature, can require: and it is hard to say, whether more wisdom has been shewn in contriving, or prudence in managing, or generosity in supporting, these several laudable institutions. For, from wisdom and goodness thus united it is, that the reformation of manners has been the concern of some, that the sinner may be converted from the error of his ways: that the promoting christian knowledge, and propagating the gospel among barbarous nations, continues to be the care of others; whereby its sound is gone out into all the earth, and its words unto the ends of the world \*.—From hence also it is, that the sick are healed, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed; and even lunacy and madness, the miserable ruins of human reason, are either repaired, or so supported, as not to prove destructive and dangerous to others. In a word, that no period of life may be overlooked from the cradle to the grave, the watchful eye of benevolence

\* Rom. x. 18.

not only co-operates with the goodness of the Creator in producing the fruit of the womb into being, but with his providence also in promoting their well-being; for when exposed and deserted, when their *father and mother forsake them*,—even then charity taketh them up, to train them in the way wherein they should go, that when they are old they may not depart from it.

All these, and innumerable other benefits, are daily derived from those various sources of benevolence which contribute greatly to the glory, and, we trust, will also secure the prosperity, of these kingdoms; as the success wherewith these several good designs have hitherto been crowned, is an evident proof that the hand of God is with us, and that *he maketh all our ways of charity to prosper*. But, to merit the continuance of this success, we must also merit the continuance of the divine favour. Religion, therefore, and benevolence, must go hand in hand; and acts of piety should always be inseparably connected with our works of charity. Behold them here associated in that lovely union by this devout, and charitable assembly! whose *prayers, like those*

those of *Cornelius*, will be followed by their alms, that both may go up *for a memorial before God.*

We have now been rendering our annual tribute of praise and thanksgiving, for the benefits which this hospital hath both received, and dispensed, during the years that are past; as well as offering up our prayers and supplications, for the success and prosperity of those which are to come. As to what remains—the nature, and design of this establishment are so well known; the advantages arising from it to the industrious, and unfortunate poor have been so fully experienced; and the motives to the voluntary contributions of the benevolent, which are its life and support, have been inculcated with so much force of reason and eloquence, by those who have gone before me in this good work, that little is left for me to say on these particulars; far less, indeed, than what your own sensibility, and the tender feeling of a good heart, will readily suggest to you. Nay, there is one principal branch of this charity, the deplorable case of *poor lying-in married women*, which refers itself with peculiar propriety to the com-

compassionate sentiments of that sex which is justly entitled to the name of tenderness. By this soft power of sympathy they are always inclined to assist, and it is the appointment of Providence that they also should suffer, the pangs and throes of a *woman in her travail*: and sad experience often teaches them how much the common safety, of both the parent and the child, depends upon the care and skilfulness, and comfortable provisions, that are never more necessary than on such pressing occasions. Nor is it only at the critical time, when their *hour of sorrow draweth nigh*, that this hospital gives admittance to these distressed objects, but whenever any previous accident, or sickness, calls for its relief. And who would not cheerfully embrace the opportunity of recommending them to a place where *all their bed is made easy in their sickness?* Where nothing will be wanting that either care can provide, or skill can execute; and where she, who might otherwise have sunk under the accumulated weight of poverty, disease, and pregnancy, as soon as she is delivered of the child, will no more remember the mitigated anguish of her travail, for

*joy that a man is born into the world* \*.—And, can benevolence be carried to a higher pitch? Can any charity surpass that which is the happy means, under God, not only of giving life, but saving from death? No *Rachel weeping for her children because they are not!* No children bewailing their parent, and crying out, in the language of the prophet, *Woe is me! my mother—Her sun is gone down while yet it was day* †!

But, however the powers of compassion and sensibility may operate on the tender sex, in favour of this branch of our charity, there are various other objects to provide for, in which you will all feel a common concern. For *man is naturally born to trouble*, and no sex, or rank, or age, can claim an exemption from sickness, pain, or bodily injuries. And yet, though in these common infirmities of our nature, the rich and the poor must suffer together; even then, how great a disparity is there in the manner, and circumstances of their cure? The opulent can command the aid of medicine to relieve, the amusements of

\* John xvi. 21.

† Jeremiah xv. 9.

life to divert, and the officiousness of friends to console, their pains : whilst all that the indigent desire, or hope for is, that by your bounty they may obtain the single privilege of being admitted into this infirmary : and there indeed, they find themselves equally happy with the wealthy, in the efficacious means that are used for their recovery ; often happier in the less complicated symptoms of their disorder. For it must not be dissembled, that with too many in affluent circumstances, their pains are frequently produced from their very pleasures. They so far overload the body with enjoyment, that at last it is brought to bend under the burthen of its own folly. Not so the industrious, but unhappy, sufferer.— Ever patient of the extremes of heat and cold, he goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, until the evening \* ; but by overstraining the animal powers, by exposing his ill-covered body to some malignant blast, or to many accidents which the rich are happily free from ; peradventure some mischief befals him, and all his strength in which he trusted becomes weakness. Thus feeble and sore smitten, and

\* Psalm civ. 23.

roaring

*roaring for the very disquietness of his heart,* where can he hope to find succour and relief!—Friends he may want, *silver and gold* he has none; and though many may see and look upon him, yet all may pass by on the other side. But ye are the good Samaritans that have *compassion upon him*, that convey him to this *inn* of charity, and *take care of him*; and, in return for your liberal contributions which support him in sickness, and restore him to health, *the blessing of him that was ready to perish will come upon you*\*.

But liberal as your contributions for these charitable uses have hitherto been; and, derived as they are from the united streams of piety and humanity, they will never fail, yet I cannot but observe, that some share of them being at present necessarily appropriated to the payment of rent for this Infirmary, must cause a proportionable deduction from a more important, and interesting article. How greatly then would it redound to the benefit, as well as credit of this hospital, could a proper edifice be erected, more commodious for the

\* Job xxiii. 23.

poor

poor patients, and less liable to the annual charge expended on the present houses of reception ? Encouraged by the success which others of our fellow-labourers in these pious works have met with, a particular subscription has been opened for this laudable undertaking : and let us indulge the pleasing hope, that, amidst so many noble structures which the piety and munificence of the public have erected to the service of our great Creator : amidst so many commodious ones also which the voluntary bounty of private persons have raised, and are daily raising, for the benefit of our distressed fellow-creatures — Permit us to hope, I say, that this *county* likewise may be adorned with one that may deliver down the name, and benefits, of the MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL to the latest posterity. And what, in comparison of these, were the stupendous, but often useless, structures of ancient *Greece* and *Rome* ? They might serve, indeed, to excite the wonder and astonishment of former ages ; as their ruins are still a subject of curiosity, and admiration, to the present : but many of them convey to us no better idea than that of power acquired by oppression ;

pression ; or of luxury, dissipating that power in vanity and profusion : whilst the public edifices which adorn this renowned metropolis, as far surpass theirs, in the uses to which they are appropriated, as the purity and simplicity of our religious worship excels the gross absurdities of paganism ; or as benevolence and love for our fellow-creatures is more agreeable to the dictates of reason and humanity than that barbarous policy, which set the unfortunate, and inferior, class of men on the same level with the beasts that perish.

And now, let me sum up the whole with the exhortation of an inspired apostle—*To do good, and to distribute, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*—To which I may add the observation of a learned heathen, “ In nothing do men more resemble the Deity than by doing good.” Let the apostle then persuade ; let the philosopher recommend, and let the preacher enforce, the practice of this duty. Nor let it be forgot, that we must be merciful after our power. He that hath much should give plenteously ; and

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he that hath *little* should do his diligence gladly to give of that *little*. For at the great day of account, the *poor widow* for her *mite*, and the *rich man* for his *talent*, will have their due credit given them in the book of life: and happy, for ever happy shall they be, whose charity in relieving the wants, in healing the infirmities, and instructing the ignorance of their necessitous brethren, shall go up for a memorial before God, to cover, and atone for, a multitude of sins.

## IX. NOMES

comprehend the end of his own life and death until  
they end in hell. And with the coming of yester  
day to conclude the day before yesterday for poor  
righteous souls living, we are told that now our  
time to decide what is needed now, liberty can  
be lost here without note nor warning but  
it will be given to us in judgment of our works  
and if we fail to give them the examination of our  
own hearts and confess them to God, then to come  
down from the judgment seat of Christ in hell.

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III. 107

## SERMON XLI.

CHRISTIANITY A MERCIFUL AND BENEVOLENT RELIGION.

LUKE ix. 54, 55, 56.

*And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said; Lord! wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven to consume them as Elias did?*

*But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: For the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.*

RELIGIOUS persuasion, when founded on truth, is a powerful principle of action: it is not less so when built upon error; but the effects are widely different: the one producing a sober and uniform disposition to promote the glory of God, and the good of

B b 2 man-

mankind ; whilst the other, hurried on with much intemperate heat, thinks to do God service, by violating the laws of equity and humanity.

Of the pernicious effects of such an erroneous zeal, the history of every religion, age, and nation, presents us with numerous proofs; but not one, among them all, that comes up to that execrable, inhuman attempt, the providential defeat whereof, we this day thankfully commemorate.—The malevolent purpose of the two disciples will, upon a comparison, appear to fall far short of it. Both parties were, indeed, actuated by *a zeal without knowledge*\* : both considered the objects of their malice as Heretics devoted to perdition, and both sought to realize their intended vengeance by the means of inevitable destruction.—And although it may seem strange, that the constant followers of their divine Master,—they who had always seen his miraculous powers exerted for the benefit, never to the prejudice, much less the destruction of mens' lives,—that they should wish him to enable them to *call down fire from heaven*† to con-

\* Rom. x. 2.

† Luke ix. 54.

sume

sume a poor village with its inhabitants;—it will, however, lessen our surprize, if we consider, that the two disciples were still in the profession of a religion, which had only temporal rewards and punishments for its sanctions. They remembered a somewhat similar instance under that dispensation, and referred to it as a precedent; they knew, too, that their Lord assumed a *power to forgive sins*\*; and it was natural for them to believe he had power likewise to punish them: but they themselves did not assume that power.—The over-zealous followers of another master impiously assumed both: and what in James and John seems only to have been a sudden start of passion against a few inhospitable Samaritans; which however was soon corrected by the gentle rebuke they met with; was, in the incorrigible and fiery zealots of this day, a deep and long concerted plot of more extensive ruin—It was to destroy, by a most infernal explosion, the King, the Princes, the Prelates, the Nobles and Commons of the Realm when assembled in Parliament—It was to overturn and tear up, from the very foundation, the whole frame of the constitu-

\* Matt. ix. 6.

tion in Church and State, and instead thereof, to erect, under the baneful shade of intolerance, an uncontrollable dominion over the persons and property, and consciences of all who should *not fall down and worship the idolatrous images they meant to set up* \*.

Unhappy, infatuated men ! to think of re-establishing a religion by means so contrary to the humane, and benevolent principles of its blessed author ! Well had it been for them, if they, who pretended to have the key of all scripture-knowledge, had thence learnt *what manner of spirit* † they ought to have been of ! Well had it been, if they, who arrogantly assumed to be of the Society of Jesus, had observed his precepts, and governed themselves by his example, who *came not to destroy mens lives but to save them* ‡.

But I mean not to *bring against them a railing accusation* § : *they have received the due reward of their deeds* ||. It will be more pleasing to every good mind, and may tend in some measure, to excite our gratitude for the re-

\* Dan. iii. 5.

§ 2 Pet. ii. 11.

† Luke ix. 55.

|| Luke xxiii. 41.

‡ Ver. 56.

peated

peated mercies of this day, to observe, from the declaration in the text, that one of the many benefits, which the world hath derived from the christian institution, is,

That it hath produced a happy change, even in regard to the present interests of mankind, by giving a more extensive activity to the principles of justice, and humanity; and contributing to lessen the miseries, and increase the happiness of human life, beyond the example of former times.

I presume it will be admitted, that this declaration of our Lord, though it includes but a small part of that wonderful plan of goodness which he came to execute, is, however, such a part as proclaims him merciful and gracious, studious of the welfare, and solicitous for the safety and tranquility of human life. It is, indeed, a most engaging instance of his own benevolence and humanity; sufficient to induce the unbeliever himself to admire, and imitate so amiable a character. *If in this life only be hath hope* \*;

\* Cor. xv. 19.

if nature teacheth him to wish its preservation; to be secure from the violence of the oppressor, and the persecution of the zealot; to be easy and unmolested in his enjoyments, relieved and pitied in his misfortunes; if these be the principal ends the unbeliever aims at, let him not revolt at the means that are offered by his Saviour. Especially, as the offer is charged with no mystery to affront his reason; nor enforced with any authority to disgust his pride. The meek and lowly Jesus doth not here assume the glorious titles that were justly given him. Whenever he thought fit to give proofs of his divinity, by exerting his miraculous powers, he left others to proclaim him the Son of God: but when he was to set an example of his benevolence and humanity, he condescends to stile himself the Son of Man. Under this tender relation, he was sensibly affected at the miseries and calamities brought upon man by man.—He saw from what turbid sources those disorders were wont to flow: and he provided, as far as wisdom and goodness could provide, an effectual remedy in the humane and generous principles of his religion: a religion that was not to be local, or confined within the limits of

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one country, or people; but was, progressively, to diffuse its mild and merciful spirit over the face of the whole earth. And, in this sense, it may be said to be a religion of humanity; as, in the sense of the apostle, humanity is religion.

That the beneficial influence of christianity hath been more generally felt than acknowledged, is undoubtedly true; because it is likewise true, that men are apt to rest contented with the fruition of any good, without troubling themselves to investigate the cause. They may perhaps have observed that other religions, and some modes even of the christian religion, have been imposed by means the most injurious to human happiness.—Paganism by impure and barbarous rites; mohammedism by compulsion and the sword of violence: superstitious bigotry by fettering the mind, and tormenting the body; and enthusiasm of every sort, by the subversion of order and legal government: but they might likewise see and experience, that pure and genuine christianity breathes nothing but *peace and good-will towards men*\*: is a rule of conduct

\* Luke ii. 14.

that

that must, in every view, approve itself to their social nature ; and is so far from countenancing any violation of their respective interests, that it strengthens all the ties of justice and humanity ; enjoining us to *speak evil of no man* \*, to *do violence to no man* †, but giving us a new commandment to *love one another* : to *do good to those that hate us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us* ‡ ; thereby disposing us to be serviceable to each other in the several connexions of domestic, social, and commercial life ; and creating a reciprocal confidence and fidelity in our dealings, from a strict regard to that equitable precept of always *doing to others what we expect they should do unto us* §.—Christianity, thus transfusing its divine philanthropy into the religious and civil establishments of any country, will not give the least colour for oppression in the one, or persecution in the other.—It may enable men to bear, but will never impose, them.

How far, and in what particular instances, these benevolent principles have been found,

\* James iv. 11.      † Luke iii. 14.      ‡ Matt. v. 44.

§ Matt. vii. 12.

to operate, would lead to an enquiry beyond our reach. Virtue and vice, respecting either times, or persons, can only be comparative: and although to fix a charge of cruelty and inhumanity on any particular age, or nation, may seem an uncharitable, as well as doubtful imputation; yet, if we consider the temper and conduct of the world in general, antecedent to the time when our Saviour came to instruct and reform it, we shall find that the natural ties of equity and humanity, which were graciously intended to form the strongest bond of social happiness, had but a feeble and precarious hold upon the bulk of mankind. Ever ready *to break its bands asunder and to cast away its cords from them\**, they left little security for many of the present rights and privileges of human life; no effectual security for life itself, in most of the religious and civil institutions which then obtained in the world. For, as every government, if those deserve that name, would, of course, adopt some mode of religion; so the principles of such religion would have their natural influence upon the rules of government. But, in those times, the princes of

\* Psalm ii. 3.

the earth were despotic, and their religion idolatrous; alike unfavourable to the interests, and prodigal of the lives of men.

Miserable condition of human nature! when dominion was founded upon oppression, and the most essential part of religious worship consisted in cruelty—most unnatural cruelty! when, as the prophet describes it, *they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Moloch*\*.

If it be said that no conclusion can hence be drawn in favour of christianity; inasmuch as those were times of ignorance, and savage manners; unpolished by the arts, unacquainted with the refinements of social life: so that, admitting the present condition of mankind to be more happy, it is only because states and kingdoms are more civilized, and the rules of policy and good government better understood.—

But, is not this to mistake the effect for the cause? and to suppose, that the principles of true religion have no part in the in-

\* 2 Kings xvii. 17.

stitutions,

stitutions, no influence on the manners of a civilized people? If nothing was ever wanted to establish a general sense of humanity, but civilization and sound policy; whence was it that, in the celebrated states of Greece and Rome, soils that produced much philosophic virtue, such modes of cruelty were authorised and practised, as, in these days, would strike a religious mind with horror? Whence was it that they, with all the learning, the arts and embellishments of life, not only connived at, but gave a public sanction to customs directly repugnant to the laws of nature itself? I am not here alluding to the many ingenuous torments inflicted on the un-offending christians—not otherwise offending, than because they were christians; and would not be idolators.—The features of those times were marked, if possible, with more inhuman traits—Where, for instance, was that parental affection and care for their infant offspring, which the universal Parent hath impressed on the fiercest animals?—Where those generous sensations of pity and concern for the unhappy, which should distinguish and adorn the rational species? when those were sacrificed to the convenience, and these to the diversion

fion and entertainment of the public?—If their religion taught them that their gods were powerful and vindictive, if a vain-glorious pride led them to account the rest of mankind barbarians, and to treat them as such; or, if the laws of humanity were so far superseded by those of conquest, that they were not ashamed to sport with the miseries of their captive fellow-creatures, could the unfeeling barbarity of savage life itself do more?

The truth is, we are so dazzled, in our younger years, with the splendid actions of the great, and so delighted with the ingenious productions of the learned men of those times, that we overlook the inhumanity, the injustice, and oppression, which were both the cause, and the effect of their enormous grandeur. And hence the great apostle sums up the general character of the gentile world by asserting, what, in similar terms, their own historians are candid enough to acknowledge, that they were full of envy, murder, deceit,—without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful\*.

\* Rom. i. 31.

Nor were these destructive principles peculiar to the nations which knew not God. Even the vine which his own right hand had planted, became so degenerate, that when the master of the vineyard looked that it should have brought forth grapes, the generous fruits of every virtue ; behold it brought forth wild grapes\* ; nothing but the sour pernicious spirit of malice and uncharitableness. Hating, and hated by, the rest of the world, the Jews were not only divided into factions ; but their religion too was split into various sects. Hence sprung enthusiasm, and fanaticism on the one hand ; sedition and insurrections on the other : whilst the malignant doctrine of retaliation furnished a weapon common to all. Indeed, the nearer they approached the expected period of their deliverance from the Roman yoke ; and it was from a triumphant Messiah that they did expect it ; the more their enthusiasm began to operate ; for the same spirit that corrupted their religion, had perverted their judgment. Their Messiah was to take ample vengeance on all their enemies. — They rejected him as the Prince of Peace,

\* Isaiah v. 4.

who came not to destroy mens lives but to save them \*.

But happy had it been for them, and for all who have since called upon his name, if his tender care and solicitude for the comfort and security of human life, had always had its due effect! as it certainly would have, was the merciful spirit of his religion every where properly cultivated; and left to its natural, unperverted influence on the human mind. But the perversion of a rule is often found to produce as much mischief as the having no rule at all. Hence those unscriptural doctrines, and erroneous tenets, which have sometimes committed the christian world in most destructive conflicts, to the reproach of its humanity. Hence also those bloody tragedies that have often been acted under the mask of zeal for a pretended Infallible Church; which, in some countries not yet rescued from its usurpations, still keeps the sword of persecution unsheathed, and suspended over truth and liberty.

\* Luke ix. 56.

And

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And yet, infidelity will find little cause of triumph in these unhappy divisions, as they are no more than our divine Master and his apostles prepared us to expect; intimating, that, as the genuine spirit of his religion would not fail to be adulterated, and his doctrines perverted to promote the views of selfishness and ambition, it would seem as if he *came not to send peace upon earth, but a sword* \*.

But granting, what is much to be lamented, that the peace of the world hath often been disturbed, and its happiness interrupted on a religious account; is this to be imputed to the natural spirit of christianity, or to the corruptions that have been artfully introduced into it?—If the great physician of souls hath prescribed a proper remedy to *save mens' lives*, is he to be blamed because others have added such baneful ingredients as tended to *destroy them*? As well may we blame that glorious luminary the sun, because its rays, when concentrated to a point, will burn, and consume whatsoever they are aimed at.—No, to do justice to the mild, beneficial influence of the

\* Matt. x. 34.

christian religion, we should take our estimate of it from those establishments where its generous principles are suffered to have their free course ; not where they are wrested to serve the purposes of despotic power, or withheld to keep the mind in a state of submissive ignorance—not where men are enjoined to believe what reason pronounces incredible, and are *compelled* to come in to a mode of worship, which by its pomp and splendor, is more calculated to captivate the senses, than to correct the heart : but, where the scriptures, as happily amongst ourselves, are allowed to be read with freedom, and are explained with sincerity : where the established form of worship is solemnized with decency ; and every conscientious separation from it is tolerated with charity.—In a word, where each individual enjoys his civil and religious freedom, under no restraints, but such as the public wisdom hath judged conducive to the public safety. Opinions, indeed, will be free; and they will also be different : they are the natural offspring of reason, and moral intellect ; nor will true religion, or just government, ever decline to be tried by them : so that however men may differ in lesser matters,

ters, or on points of indifferent obligation ; yet, whilst they do not disturb the peace of society, nor strike at fundamental principles, a protestant government will not control, much less will it persecute such opinions—  
*For why should one man's liberty be judged of another man's conscience ? to his own master he must stand or fall\**. This is the apostle's rule : and it is a glorious proof of the wisdom and temper of this country, that our laws, and our religion hold the same language.

Surely, then, if this be a desirable state of things, we, of these days, ought to be more particularly thankful for it ; as there were times when our less happy fore-fathers did not enjoy it.—A time, especially, scarce beyond memory, when their dearest rights and privileges were made to fly like chaff, before the wind of a dispensing power : when the royal word gave no confidence ; the most solemn of all oaths no security ; nor the established religion and laws an effectual barrier against the insidious attacks of popish counsellors, and arbitrary measures.—And to what

\* Rom. xiv. 4.

are we to ascribe our deliverance from those worst of grievances? but, under Providence, to the auspicious arrival of that generous, humane prince, which rendered this day still more memorable by an additional blessing: and who came not to seize the spoils of a tottering constitution, but to repair, and establish it upon that firm, and solid basis, which nothing but our own weakness or perverseness can destroy.

We must not, however, *think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think* \*; nor assume an exclusive claim to the beneficial influences of christianity.—Even in those dominions where human traditions are imposed with ~~as~~ much solemnity as inspired truths, the sun of righteousness, amidst all the clouds of art and ignorance that obscure it, hath happily dispelled many distressful circumstances of human life, that passed unpitied, or unrelieved by any public provision in former times.—Not the most civilized parts of the pagan world were adorned with such commodious receptacles, as are now every where open to the disabled, and unfortunate part of man-

\* Rom. xii. 3.

kind.

kind. Nay, the very *weapons of war* are now subject to laws of humanity, and its *arrows no longer drunk with the blood of captives*\*; but, if *wounded and sore smitten*, they are treated with such tender care, with such skilful assiduity, that the art of destroying men's lives, is, perhaps, less improved than the art of saving them.

And yet, that there should be so much unhappy occasion of thus exercising either the one or the other, is a painful reflection to every good mind,—is affecting also both from religious and social considerations; inasmuch as the present temper of too many of our protestant brethren, embroiled, as it is, by the seducing arts of their ambitious leaders; seems little disposed to act agreeably to the principles of that *faith which worketh by love*†.

But we are encouraged to hope better things: and the pleasing accounts we have received of the success of his majesty's arms, over those of his deluded subjects, is a good ground of hope.—Let this be a further motive with us of praise and thankfulness to

\* Deut. xxxiv. 42.

+ Gal. v. 6.

Almighty God for the merciful deliverance of this day : and may it speedily incline them to consider *what manner of spirit they ought to be of\**, and to *know the things that belong to their peace, before they be bid from their eyes †.* In the mean time, let us be careful not to forfeit the divine protection by an ungrateful sense of it ; but let us ever acknowledge, and adore that merciful Providence which hath been so frequently manifested in favour of our happy constitution : at one time delivering it from a superstitious tyranny, which held even *our kings in chains, and our nobles as with links of iron ‡*: at another, preserving it from the implacable and hellish malice of popish conspirators.—Then, recovering it from the impious hand of usurpation.—Again, rescuing it from the intemperate zeal of despotic bigotry—and, at last, happily settling it where every lover of his country, every friend to civil liberty and true religion, will rejoice to see it flourish,

\* Luke ix. 55: † Ibid. xxix. 42, ‡ Psalm cxlix. 8.

## S E R M O N XLII.

THE ADVANTAGES DERIVED FROM THE  
CHRISTIAN RELIGION TO SOCIETY.

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MATT. vii. 24.

*Therefore, whosoever beareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock.*

THE sayings here referred to compose that plain, comprehensive rule of duty to God and man, in which our divine Master had just been instructing his numerous disciples. This rule, he told them, was, in some points, materially different from what they had *heard said of old time*;—it prescribed a more pure morality, a more rational devotion, and a more enlarged benevolence: and he closed the whole by observing, that as the practice of these duties would secure their

happiness, so, to know, and to neglect them, would be an instance of folly that must end in misery.

This is plainly intimated in the comparison between a *wise* and *foolish* builder.—The *house* of the one, being founded upon a *rock*, in every part remained firm, complete, and durable:—That of the other, who had only attended to the pleasantness of the spot, but had never examined the solidity of the foundation, was built upon the *sand*; magnificently enough, no doubt, and enriched with all the ornaments that comported with the grandeur of the design:—but, unable to resist the violence of the winds, and rains, and torrents that drove against it, and for which the *foolish man* had made no provision; it fell, and great was the fall thereof.

A distinction of character is, here, so strongly marked by a difference of conduct, as to give a peculiar force to our Saviour's application. Therefore, saith he, *whoever beareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock.*

*rock* \*.—The comparison, whether taken from real objects, or expressed in that figurative form, in which it was usual, with the eastern people, to convey their instruction; is just, significant, and comprehensive.—The wise man's *house* is here put to signify his happiness, through the whole duration of his being;—by the *rock*, whereon he built it, are meant the fixed unalterable principles that the divine Teacher had been inculcating as the *will of his Father which is in heaven*: and the virtue, resulting from a practical attention to those principles, is, in the following verse, represented by the strength and stability of the fabric: for although it stood exposed to the severest trials—although the *rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat against that house*; yet it fell not, for it was founded upon a *rock* †.

To the universal establishment of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and to the happy influence which the knowledge of its sacred laws is to spread over the world, bear all the prophets witness. The rapid advancement, also, of the christian religion, whilst supported by signs;

\* Matt. vii. 24.

† Ibid. v. 25.

and

*and wonders and divers gifts of the Holy Ghost,* affords an ample testimony of its divine original: but its future progress was to be carried on, both by the active and passive virtues of its professors; and, in this view, we may observe, how descriptive this emblem is of that faith which was to be founded on virtue: how descriptive, likewise, of the establishment, and duration of a church, that was for ever to remain impregnable against the strongest assaults of human malice, or infernal envy.

But from the whole passage, we are given to understand, that the great excellence of our Saviour's doctrines, which, in contradistinction to those of other teachers, are emphatically styled **HIS SAYINGS**; consists in giving that firm, and universal support to religion and virtue, which was every where wanted, by resting them on the sure foundation of the revealed will of God.—From whence it will follow, that a sincere obedience to the divine will, as made known to us in the gospel; together with our best endeavours to promote the knowledge of it in others; will be

be our truest wisdom, and, in all events, effectually secure our final happiness.

I mean not to establish this conclusion, by casting a shade over those virtues that have at any time been produced by mere natural reason, in order to place the lovely fruits of revelation in a clearer point of view.—This would be a wrong method of doing honour to the gracious author of both these good gifts. Doubtless, a power of moral discernment; a capacity to distinguish between right and wrong; between what is lovely and odious; useful and pernicious; being essential to the nature of man, must, at all times, if duly cultivated, have furnished a natural rule of duty; and, as far as the conduct of mankind was conformable to such rule, so far it was virtuous: not less amiable, less useful; nor, we may humbly hope, less approved of God; because the fitness of it was discovered by the light of reason, than a jewel would be less valuable, for being found by the help of a glimmering taper, and not by the light of the sun.

I am aware, however, that human wisdom is always ready to avail itself of such concessions

fions as these ; and proud of being able to collect the will of God from the constitution of things, as the only sure ground of natural religion, will neither admit the expediency, nor accept the offer of any supernatural revelation.

Far be it from the disciples of Christ, to aim at weakening the principles of natural religion ; or, to disparage the duties that result from it. Our great Master hath taught us another lesson.—It is through him that we behold its original purity : and, if the most strenuous advocates for the religion, or law of nature, would dispassionately attend to his sayings ; they would hear him pleading the very cause for which they are so solicitous ; and declaring, at the first entrance on his ministry, that he *came not to destroy*, or abolish, *the moral law* ; but to fulfil, to perfect, and strengthen its obligations.

And will any one maintain, that the genuine principles of that law, which would have shewn mankind what God and nature required of them, were ever so universally known, as to need no clearer direction, no stronger

stronger enforcement, than every man found in his own natural reason? Did the same pure and spiritual worship of God—the same enlarged benevolence to man—the same motives to virtue, and the same sanctions, obtain in any part of the world, as since Christ came down from the Father of lights to enforce and reveal them?—We have seen, indeed, some beautiful systems of natural religion delineated, and raised in our own time, and the main principles of duty supported with much ingenuity, and strength of argument. But whence did these celebrated productions derive their chief excellence? If from reason alone, without any assistance from revelation, why did we not gather as lovely fruits from the diligent cultivation of ancient wisdom?—Truth, we know, is always the same; and, whensoever discovered, becomes a proper rule for the direction of moral and accountable agents. Nevertheless, had the discovery been for ever left to each man's own reason, the rule, in that case, could only have been, what human wisdom itself is, imperfect, unequal, discordant, partial; and, at best, collected by gradual, and slow deductions from the nature, and fitness, of things: but neither clear enough

to

to be understood by some, nor carrying authority enough to bind others.—Whereas he, who was *a teacher sent from God*, hath delivered a rule of faith and practice, in terms that are plain, intelligible, and of universal comprehension: so that what sets the christian rule above all competition, is, its being a faithful transcript of the will of God, unchangeable in its nature, universal in its extent, adapted to the capacities, and conducive to the happiness of mankind in general. For *the wisdom that cometh from above*, was never meant to be confined to the philosopher, and the learned; nor to men of any particular nation, rank or profession; inasmuch as *God is no respecter of persons*: and therefore, our great Master declares, that *whoever beareth his sayings, and doeth them, shall be like unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock*.—The poor, as well as the rich, the slave as well as the master, will naturally wish for some place of abode, some shelter from the storms, and tempests that would otherwise beat upon them: and although the one may design to build a palace, and the other only a cottage, yet the wisdom of both, and the security of both, will be so far equal, as both

both are careful to build upon a sound foundation, the *foundation of prophets, and apostles; Christ himself being the chief corner-stone* \*.

But, in order to shew the insufficiency of any other rule of duty, and happiness, than that which is revealed to us in the scriptures, we may further inquire, what structures of religion and virtue the powers of reason appear to have raised on its own foundation, either in former times, and previous to the great support derived from the christian institution ; or, among the present inhabitants of those remote parts of the world, whose religious instruction this venerable Society hath, for many years, piously endeavoured to promote.

Let the inquiry, then, have all the advantage that can be desired ; and, passing over the dark uncultivated ages, carry it, at once, into those enlightened times and countries, when the wisdom of the Greeks gave the law to the manners and customs of other nations ; and affected to explore both the material and

\* Eph. ii. 10.

moral world, with all the keenness of philosophic penetration.

Here, indeed, every ingenuous mind feels a pleasure in tracing out, and admiring, the great, and eminent qualities of some good men amongst them. It would be invidious to deny them the praise of extending the line of reason beyond its usual limits ; and of raising some noble structures of civil, and moral virtue, even upon the ruins of human knowledge. It was likewise no small merit to hold a steady, consistent conduct through the various, and trying events of life ; to learn how to endure with patience, and to enjoy with prudence ; some receiving their portion of good or evil ; of censure, or approbation ; of success, or disappointment, with a commendable equality of mind and temper ; and others with a sturdy kind of pride, that scorned to be affected by them.—But, what was to be their portion after this life, or whether they were to pass into another state of existence, was never so firmly established, as to constitute a generally acknowledged rule of conduct.

Many,

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Many, even of those who stood foremost in the rank of science, and who had discernment enough to see, that their duty and happiness were greatly interested in the decision ; appear, at times, to have differed as much from themselves, on this important question, as they generally did from one another.

In one point however they all agreed, (some few excepted, who made it a rule to doubt of every thing) that there was a natural, and essential difference between the effects of vice, and those of virtue : and that the welfare of society, as well as individuals, must greatly depend on a practical attention to that difference. They saw, what every thinking person must see, that, as no society could subsist without government, nor government without order, nor order without laws ; so neither would laws themselves avail without the aid of some powerful internal principle to enforce their operation. Religious institutions, founded on right notions of the perfections and providence of the one supreme God, and collected from the visible marks of his moral government, (which form the great outline of natural religion) would have furnished this

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aid.—But was their's a religion to curb licentious passions in men, whilst it consecrated the vices even of their gods? was that a rational mode of worship, which admitted into its rites the most flagrant violations of decency and humanity? and could the virtuous have any connection with such a religion, or derive any support from it? The policy, indeed, of the leading ranks, supplied by fiction, what was wanting in truth.—They gave a sanction to their religious and civil establishments by a pre-concerted appeal to oracular decisions; and whilst these were passed upon the vulgar for the will of their gods, or the decrees of fate; the better sort were animated to deeds of valour, which with them was virtue, from motives of public utility, of national glory, and personal honour.—On these topics many excellent things were said, many splendid actions were done by them; which perhaps have been more admired than practised.—Nor would their disquisitions on moral subjects have been less admirable, for the noble, and elevated sentiments they were graced with; had all been uniform, and consistent, as truth should be: but as every philosopher had his system, and every one his sayings,

sayings, on the supreme good of man ; so, whilst one party made it consist in being indifferent to the world, and living above it ; another placed it in the serene delights and enjoyments of the world. . Hence the opposite systems of the indolent Epicurean, and the enduring Stoic ; which, after dividing the most civilized parts of the world between them, had, sometime before our Saviour's appearance, crept into the sacred enclosure of God's own vineyard. There, likewise, they had taken root, and produced a large increase of somewhat similar fruits under the less elegant culture of the *Pharisee*, who affected to hold the most rigid principles ; and of the *Sadducee*, who professed to hold none at all. Alike convinced, that the temporal sanctions of the Mosaic law had long ceased to operate among them ; the *Pharisee* concluded right in regard to the end, that happiness would, hereafter, be the reward of virtue : but, by substituting a more scrupulous attention to some little ceremonious observances than to the *weightier matters* of the moral law, he erred in respect of the means : whereas the *Sadducee*, taking his measures from the present state of things, which produced *one event*

to the righteous and to the wicked; contented himself with an outward observance of the law, without holding himself accountable to God who gave it.

Amidst all this instability, and difference of opinion, when true religion, and virtue, had no sure ground to stand on, the world was visited by *an inspired and universal Teacher*; one, whose *sayings* claimed so much more regard than those of human wisdom, by how much the wonderful works that accompanied them, surpassed the utmost efforts of human power.

Now though such was the state of things, as hath been represented, among the most civilized and knowing people of those times; but who, as their great apostle observes, *through wisdom knew not God; neither glorified him as God*;—though their religion was idolatrous; their most sacred mysteries impure; many of their established customs unnatural, and their notions of a future state absurd and chimerical:—nevertheless, all this was wisdom and happiness, social happiness, at least, compared with the wretched, and brutish condition of the

the native Indians, and others in our foreign-settlements; before this Society piously undertook, as one object of their care, to civilize their manners, and enlighten their minds; by instructing them in the plain, and rational principles of christianity.

In the mean time, here was a fair field open to the advocates for the sufficiency of human reason, to examine what efforts its simple, unassisted powers had made to emerge out of intellectual darkness; and what systems of virtue and happiness had been erected upon its own foundation? No! separated and disjoined, as these sons of nature ever had been, from all enlightened countries; they could neither import *the wisdom of the Egyptians*, nor collect any scattered rays of revelation from a commerce with the Jews, as the Greeks perhaps had done: so that these poor outcasts of the world still remained sunk in sloth and ignorance; contenting themselves with a savage kind of liberty, and a mode of religion as barbarous as their manners.

It might, indeed, have been expected, that the same zeal for the protestant religion; or,

at least, for the liberty of professing it in their own way, which induced many of the first settlers to take refuge in those remote uncultivated parts, from the ill-judged severities inflicted upon them at home; would, from every motive of policy, humanity, and charity, have made the civilization, and religious instruction of the natives around them, their early and common concern. In all the charters and grants from the crown, to the New England provinces especially, a diligent attention to religion, and a provision for the decency of public worship, had been strictly enjoined; but not so strictly enforced, as, in better times, it might have been. Hence the grandees, careful about their *many things*, had long neglected the *one thing needful*:—and when they came to think in earnest of establishments, both religious and civil; their warm contentions in regard to the forms of the one, and the ceremonies of the other, produced so much political and enthusiastic fervour, that their heated imaginations led them to believe, that evil spirits were let loose among them, to distract their councils, and torment their people \*.—

\* See Mr. Hutchinson's history of Massachusett's bay, vol. ii. p. 12—62.

A delusion ! which, in all its circumstances, is scarcely to be paralleled in the history of mankind : being as fatal to many of the innocent inhabitants, as it was injurious to the honour of God, and the credit of the colonies.

But the consequences of these, and many other impediments to a proper settlement of religion, which threatened the utter extinction of it in these colonies, did not long escape the vigilance of wise, and good men in the mother country.—They saw with what hasty strides infidelity, prophaneness, and popery, were marching through the vast extent of our American governments.—They lost no time in representing their apprehensions to the great prince then upon the throne ; whom they found as heartily disposed to propagate the protestant religion abroad, as he had been to preserve and secure it here at home. A charter of incorporation was accordingly granted to this Society, for the good purposes therein mentioned: and it states, what was *then* a melancholy fact, (and, I fear, it is too much so at present) that “ there, being no settled provision, for a learned and orthodox clergy, “ in several of the colonies : many of our

" loving subjects, for want of the administration of God's word and sacraments, seemed to be abandoned to atheism and infidelity; and others of them to popish superstition, and idolatry."

To stop the progress of these evils, the original Members of this Society under their Royal Charter, immediately proceeded with zeal and alacrity to execute their truly christian and benevolent plan.—Laying a good foundation in their own, and other liberal contributions; (which, by the blessing of God, have never failed hitherto) they were soon enabled to provide a number of discreet, orthodox Missionaries; *workmen, that needed not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* Our brethren, in the colonies, received them gladly; and their pious labours were immediately extended to *them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh*,—to a number of provincial towns and villages, which until then had been destitute of the means of public worship, and administration of the sacraments; as well as to many native Indians, and negro slaves; who, after due instruction, were solemnly admitted to christian baptism; which, although it did not

not entitle them to civil freedom, yet, in a religious sense, they were *no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*\*.

To cultivate, and confirm this general disposition to religion and piety, and to prepare the people for more readily understanding the public offices of the church; the Society, from time to time, procured schoolmasters, and catechists to be stationed in proper places,—sent over an infinite number of bibles, common prayer books, and small religious tracts, for the instruction of the poorer sort of people,—several small, but well chosen libraries for the use of the missionaries,—and handsome contributions towards the building, or repairing of churches, where the ability of the inhabitants fell short of their inclinations.

Other improvements, the mean while, kept pace with those in religion; or, rather, outran them. As population increased, agriculture, commerce, and trade increased with it.—The fine arts were introduced, literary attainments encouraged, and seminaries founded for

\* Eph. ii. 19.

the instruction of youth, in every branch of science. From these fountains would have issued a competent supply of candidates, for the sacred ministry, to protestants of every denomination; as well to those of the Independent, as of the Episcopal, persuasion; had an equal measure of convenience been dealt out to both. This was not the case:—from a variety of groundless fears and apprehensions, not the most limited episcopate was allowed to be introduced among them; not, though restrained, as was intended, to the sole power of ordaining, confirming, and superintending the conduct of the clergy;—not, although a decent provision for its support was begun to be made, and, no doubt, would have been enlarged, by the bequests and benefactions of good people; without laying any part of the burthen upon the colonies.

I leave others to decide upon the justice and charity of such an exclusion:—but, how loudly would the dissenting ministers have complained, and how justly too, had they been obliged to take the same dangerous and expensive voyages to be enabled to exercise their function, as are the native, and other, candidates for holy

holy orders in our church? who cannot be admitted to the same privileges without being personally examined and ordained here. Nevertheless, under all the difficulties on one side, and prejudices on the other; such was the diligence and moderation of our clergy, that their churches gradually increased in number; many in elegance of structure, and all in decency and order: insomuch, that, at the first opening of this mission, only five churches were to be found in the same extent of country, which had the happiness to see them multiplied to fifty times that number, in the space of little more than fifty years.—*So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed\**.

But, alas! its growth and progress have met with an untimely check! involving, in its destructive consequences, all the comforts of religion, the authority of law, and the happy effects of combined strength, and wealth, and glory!—Such were the natural productions of *bretbren who dwelt together in unity*: until the seeds of discord, thrown in by a few factious aspiring men, in some of our colonies: (and therefore factious, because they were aspiring)

\* Acts xix. 20.

presented too rich a harvest to the ancient enemies of our religion and government, not to reap it for their own advantage.

In the course of these unhappy distractions, when the tender feelings of humanity and moderation are too apt to be blunted by malevolence; it is no wonder that the religious and Joyal principles of the misionaries, and clergy, of the church of England, should expose them to the severest trials.—But, founded, as their principles were, upon the rock of truth, no storms of persecution could shake,—no floods of ungodliness undermine them. Many, indeed, authorised by their divine Master's direction, when *persecuted in one city, flew unto another*; some few, also, found means to escape hither for protection: yet, under no protection, do they eat the bread of idleness, but every where endeavour to *approve themselves as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses\**:—and as their *patient continuance in well doing will best recommend them to the protection of Providence, and the favourable regard of good men*; so we, already, have the happiness to see a fair prospect of relief to their

\* 2 Cor. vi. 4.

neces-

necessities, as well as a timely supply to the exhausted fund of this Society, by the royal munificence, and the liberal contributions of a generous, and benevolent people : virtues, which have ever formed a distinguishing feature in our national character ; and, on this occasion, are the more amiable, as being equally expressive of a regard for our holy religion, and a ready compliance with the recommendation of the sovereign.

Indeed the very commendable pains taken, in the course of this collection, by the clergy, and other well disposed persons, to explain the nature of this Institution, and the important object of propagating the gospel in foreign parts, which the Society hath ever pursued with unremitting attention ; encourage us to hope for such an increase of annual subscribers and benefactors, as may render these general collections less necessary.—And few, I trust, will withhold their benefactions, after being informed, as they have been, that, notwithstanding the expulsion of the missionaries out of the revolted colonies, there are still many insular, and continental governments, that retain those loyal principles, which the gospel

gospel of peace hath a natural tendency to confirm. And we may humbly hope, (*for charity bopeth all things, and endureth all things*) that, notwithstanding the insidious arts, and ungenerous combination of the natural enemies to the religion, as well as to the power and commerce of this country; there will yet be found so much good sense, sound policy, and conciliating moderation, both amongst our brethren in the colonies, and in the present state, as, with the blessing of Providence, may soon restore that harmony and mutual affection, which, by combining our interests, will give strength and vigour to our power.

We must not, however, presume upon this blessing unless we seriously endeavour to obtain it: and we shall obtain it, if, as taught in the text, we prefer wisdom to folly; and found our hopes of national happiness on national virtue,—on the *rock* of true religion; of unfeigned piety, unshaken loyalty, and a generous, disinterested love of our country.

These are virtues which we find strongly recommended in the christian rule of duty, and which naturally result from a conscienti-

ous practice of it.—Other teachers have made utility the main end of moral conduct; but he who was more than a teacher hath shewn us how to join utility with piety; personal good with social, and temporal happiness with eternal.

Let us then esteem it our wisdom to *know these things*, and our happiness to *do them*. And let no man deceive us with *vain words*; affecting to establish unfair distinctions between natural and revealed religion, and to *put asunder* the great principles of religious and moral duty, which the *God of nature hath joined together*. But, if some of those principles had been mistaken, if others had been perverted, and all too much neglected, it was surely a most gracious instance of divine favour to send him, who had *the words of eternal life*, to correct and restore them to their primitive strength and import: and, on a foundation made sure and perfect, by the infinite merits of his own obedience, to establish a rule of faith and practice, which, after being made known to all nations, will survive the dissolution of this material frame of things, and remain an everlasting

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lasting rule for the government and direction  
of God's spiritual kingdom.—*For heaven and  
earth shall pass away, but his words shall not  
pass away\**.

\* Matt. v. 18.

A CHARGE

A

# CHARGE

DELIVERED AT THE

BISHOP's PRIMARY VISITATION,

JULY 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 1776.

VOL. II.

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**MY REVEREND BRETHREN !**

I T may well be supposed, that the satisfaction, arising from the relation, which, by the divine permission, and his majesty's favour, I now bear to you, is very sensibly felt by me ; and, could I justly presume upon a similar satisfaction on your part, nothing would be wanting to complete mine,

But there are certain considerations that naturally occur, and must be admitted in abatement of it : such as the importance of the trust committed to me ; the qualifications necessary to discharge it ; and a consciousness, that the utmost exertion of my endeavours must fall far short of, and suffer much from a comparison with, the great abilities and truly episcopal qualifications, of my venerable predecessor, now with God.

E e 2

To

To succeed a prelate so eminently distinguished for his profound erudition, his exemplary virtue, and sincere piety, is, I fear, to succeed to the envy, the censure and invurious comparison of an observing and critical age, which is more disposed to exercise its discernment in pointing out defects in a character, than in making candid allowances for the cause of them.—His had long been a fixed and decided character; either fitted to the several stations he filled, or rising out of them; yet was he still so modest and unassuming, that he was rather solicited to meet the dignities of the church, than ambitious to seek them. He had none of that vanity which is apt to be dazzled with the glare of them; but *received* his honours meekly, and *bore* them meekly: for he soon found annexed to them a list of duties, some whereof the temper of the times would not suffer him to discharge, and others his conscience could not well dispense with; so that towards the decline of life, he was more desirous to resign his high stations, than ever he had been to obtain them. Happily, for the church in general, and for you, my brethren, in particular, he was content to be gratified with

half

half his wish \* ; and to offer up his interest  
a sacrifice to duty.

From that duty you continued to derive many singular advantages, which are not to be expected from every successor to bishop Pearce.—To him you could look up for advice and direction in all points of learning, discipline, and doctrine, with entire confidence in his well-founded opinions ; and I can easily conceive with what zeal and affection his instructions were conveyed, and with what a respectful attention they were received, by the advantages I myself derived from his benevolent and communicative disposition. Hence you must have laid in so much useful knowledge, both from his public and private instructions, during the many years he presided over you, that, was it not for the demands of usage and custom, I might well be excused this mode of address ; inasmuch as I can urge nothing more proper, or

\* Bishop Pearce wished to resign the episcopate as well as the deanery, but was only permitted to resign the latter, June 24, 1768, after having possessed that dignity about twelve years, from his appointment to it May 4, 1756.

more conducive to the continuance of the good order and regularity of this diocese, than to exhort you to a frequent recollection, and a diligent observance of the many proper directions *he* gave you: whilst *I*, on my part, shall ever account it my greatest merit to follow him, as a son would a father, though with very unequal steps.

But to aim at forming a successor by his example, and to leave his clergy well ordered by his instructions, was not the whole of your late diocesan's merit. Eminent as his services were in the cause of religion and virtue, he took care that they should not terminate with his life, but be useful to posterity. He had given early and approved specimens of his critical skill in the learned languages\*; and

* E. G. Dr. Pearce's first Edition of CICERO DE ORATORE in A. D.	—	—	1716
Second in	—	—	1732
Third in	—	—	1746
Fourth in	—	—	1771

#### LONGINUS DE SUBLIMITATE.

His First edition of it was in	1724
Second in	1732

and from thenceforward the literary attainments that had engaged and were the employment of his youth, became the delight and recreation of his old age; for they were employed to the noblest purpose, that of illustrating and expounding the word of God.

With this view he gradually improved the large fund of classical knowledge, which he had drawn from the rich stores of antiquity, by a diligent perusal of such Jewish and Heathen authors as lived nearest to the Christian Era; until, by an accurate attention to the phraseology and idioms of their respective languages, he was enabled to compel, as it were, both the one and the other, to serve as auxiliaries towards establishing the true meaning and import of similar phrases in the sacred writings.

Third (at Amst.) in	—	1733
Fourth in	—	1752
Fifth in	—	1762
Sixth in	—	1773

#### CICERO DE OFFICIIS.

His First edition was in	—	1745
Second in	—	1761

Such was the employment of every hour he could gain from his official engagements, to the last moments of a long, studious, and happy life.—Happy he was in many respects; and, in his own account, not the least so, in living to put the last hand to an excellent commentary with notes on the four Gospels, and Acts of the Apostles; the publication of which, by an unfortunate, but not irreparable accident, hath hitherto been delayed \*; but which will preserve and consecrate his name, as long as pure religion and useful learning shall be held in esteem by mankind.

In the mean while, let me observe to you, my younger brethren in particular, that the  
 \* The accident to which the bishop here alludes is thus mentioned by the Rev. Editor of Dr. Pearce's Posthumous Works.

“ It is thought necessary to inform the public, that the following work (the Commentary, &c.) was *nearly* ready to be laid before them in March last, when a sudden fire, at Messrs. Cox and Biggs's Printing-office, in the Savoy, consumed the whole of the impression. The original Manuscripts were **PROVIDENTIALLY** preserved by being in the hands of the Editor.”

See Advertisement to B. Pearce's *Commentary, &c.*  
1777.

work

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work which crowned all *bis* learned and pious labours, will, if diligently consulted, greatly facilitate, and give effect to *your's*. It will be a solid foundation whereon to erect a well proportioned structure of sacred criticism—it will supply you with the best and most durable materials for that purpose—will direct you how to adapt and place them in due order—will be a key to open many a dark and difficult passage—a light to guide you safely through it; and, like the scripture itself, which it aims at restoring to its original purity, it will be *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works*\*.

It has, indeed, of late, been the idle busyness of fanaticism to account all literary acquirements, and sound criticism, as nothing towards a right understanding the Holy Scriptures, and due discharge of the ministerial function, in comparison of certain gifted powers of discernment, which vanity is more forward to claim, than able to give any convincing proofs of. But, to such illiterate pretenders

\* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

to new and extraordinary lights, we can oppose as well the observation of an inspired apostle, as the sober judgment of the wisest and best men, both of our own and other professions, who have esteemed the books of the Old and New Testament, the noblest subject whereon to employ their time and abilities; and yet have found some things, *so hard to be understood*, as to require all their treasures of wisdom and learning to explain them.

I would not here be understood to mean those mercenary compilers of the present age, who, from a collected mass of materials, have heaped notes on notes, and commentaries on commentaries; as if, like their old fellow-labourers at Babel, they meant to make them *a tower, whose top should reach unto heaven*, and whereon, as the poet observes,

“ *Purpureus latè qui splendeat unus et alter  
Affluit pannus.*” Hor. De Arte Poetica 16.

*Those*, only, deserve our best attention, who have contributed their several abilities to elucidate and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things\*. Thus while some, with

\* Tit. ii. 12.

much

much patient industry, have collated the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts of the Old and New Testament, compared the ancient versions, collected the various readings, corrected the mistakes of transcribers, adjusted the punctuation, and, in many places, restored the original text; others have merited much true praise by settling the chronology, connecting the history, appropriating the prophecies, vindicating the miracles, stating both the external and internal evidence, and establishing the divine authority of the Mosaic and Christian Dispensations, not only to the satisfaction of every candid and rational inquirer, but often to the entire conviction of unbelievers, (of which we have lately seen a confession that does honour both to the author and to religion,) and always for the instruction of the young proficient in divinity, to whom is committed the important charge of instructing others.

I need not remind you, my brethren, how solemnly we have all acknowledged that the scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation\*; how solemnly also we promised at our

\* See article vi.

respec-

respective ordinations, to be diligent in the reading of them ; and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same \*. To the scriptures therefore, as to a well of water springing up unto everlasting life †, every faithful pastor will lead his flock : and although the well be deep, it will seldom, I trust, be beyond the reach of your abilities in general : nor can they, whose age and studies may not yet be far advanced, complain that they have nothing to draw with, whilst every kind of help is at hand for the purpose. For by carefully reading over the Bible and Testament in a regular progression ; and, at every difficult or obscure passage, consulting some one, at least, of the learned commentators ; a young clergyman will soon find himself much forwarded in scripture-knowledge : and if, on finishing this necessary task, which however must be frequently resumed, he seriously sets himself to collect the evidence for the truth of our holy religion, (an excellent summary whereof is given by Grotius, and further enlarged upon by Dr. Jenkins, and Mr. Locke, on the reasonableness of christianity)—if with regard to the great essentials of faith and doc-

\* See Ordination Service.      † John iv. 14.

trine,

trine, he has recourse to bishop Pearson on the Creed, Burnet on the articles, and to those incomparable lectures on the Church Catechism by our late learned and laborious Metropolitan \*, which form a succinct compendium of the whole body of divinity—if, in order to be acquainted with the grounds of our separation from the Church of Rome, and of the Protestant Dissenters from ours, he attentively peruses the judicious Hooker for the one, the acute Chillingworth for the other, or the learned bishop Stillingfleet for both ; adding thereto a competent share of knowledge in Ecclesiastical History, from the distinct and extended view of it given by Dr. Mosheim—if, I say, a young clergyman studiously pursues some such course of reading as this, he will, upon the whole, shew himself *an approved workman, that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* †.

It is not, however, to be expected, that all will make equal advances in sacred knowledge. As the talents of men are different, so are the opportunities of improving them;

\* Archbishop Secker, who died August 6, 1768.

† 2 Tim. ii. 15.

much

much depending on their health, leisure, situation, and circumstances—a friendly commerce with men of letters, and an easy access to proper books ; advantages that do not fall to every one's share. Not but a few books, well chosen and well studied, like a small income well managed, would set us all above a state of intellectual poverty : and we are assured, that, *if there be first a willing mind, it will be accepted according to that a man bath, not according to that he bath not* \*.

But it is incumbent on us, who are ministers of the gospel, to study men as well as books, and ourselves above all men. For little shall we be able to bring men back from error, or to guide them in the way of truth, whilst we ourselves are ignorant of the principles and motives that influence human actions. We must therefore consider human nature in all its different points of view; must endeavour to penetrate the secret recesses of the heart, to discover its virtues and its vices, the prevailing passion, the *sin that most easily besets it*, and, thence, take every proper occasion to commend and to admonish;

\* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

to exhort and to rebuke with all authority \*, As the depositaries of the sacred oracles of God, and the pure morality of the gospel, we must carefully guard the one, and not suffer the other to bend to the capricious and changeable manners of the times; but, searching after truth to enforce it; and seriously thinking on *whatsoever things are just and honest, and pure and lovely, and of good report* †, to direct the practice of them; we must, both in our public and private exhortations, give energy to our sentiments, clearness to our expressions, propriety to our delivery, decency to our deportment; and constantly endeavour to give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed ‡.

To say more on this subject to you, my brethren, is unnecessary; as from a personal knowledge of some of my clergy, a general good report of others, and the answers so readily given to my inquiries by almost all, I have great reason to think myself happy in being appointed to a diocese, wherein the ministerial duty appears to be, in general, very ably and diligently discharged. In some parishes

\* Tit. iii. 15.    † Philip. iv. 8.    ‡ 2 Cor. vi. 3.

it would be still more so, by the attention and exemplary life of a residing incumbent; or, where he is legally, or necessarily, dispensed with, of a resident and licensed curate. It has, indeed, been supposed, that the want of a patronage or vicarage house, was a sufficient excuse for non-residence; but this plea, upon a late trial, has been over-ruled; and it would ill become us to impeach the judgment, although we are given to hope, that the difficulty which some incumbents may be under, in consequence of it, will soon be removed by some proper legislative provision for the means of residence; in which the honour and interests of religion, as well as the peace and good order of society, are materially concerned.

I would not detain you by mentioning another case which has lately received a legal decision, if it did not seem to affect your own interest, and, at the same time, convey a friendly caution how, and to whom, you give titles for holy orders. For the title being held to be in the nature of a contract, the yearly stipend, conditioned in it, must remain payable, although the incumbent should himself

himself perform the whole duty of his parish; until the curate shall be otherwise provided of some ecclesiastical preferment; or, for some fault, be lawfully removed: and how difficult and expensive that may be, I leave you to judge. Some good, however, may be expected to result from this decision, as it may prevent the giving any *pretended* titles, and produce more care in giving *real* ones.

In the mean while, none, I trust, of the assisting clergy will ever suppose that the rule of law, in this case, either lessens their obligations to the incumbent, or their canonical obedience to the diocesan. For my own part, although I should be sorry to be accounted a hard taskmaster, I must nevertheless declare it to be my fixed intention to make the laws and canons of the church, the rule of my conduct. Much will depend upon you, my beneficed brethren, to make that rule in many cases easy to us both. Let me therefore earnestly entreat you, never to sign letters testimonial on any occasion whatsoever, unless the person requesting them be well known to you, and that you firmly believe in your

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conscience (which, if you do sign, you must declare) that he is qualified for that order, office, or employment to which he desires to be admitted.—You would naturally take it ill to be deceived in the character even of a menial servant, whom you could easily dismiss on finding him an improper, or unfaithful one. I will not state the infinite difference in the cases, but confide in your integrity for the right application.

I have only to add, at present, that, whenever your situation and circumstances require your duty to be *constantly* supplied, either by a clergyman of this, or any other diocese, I shall expect that himself and his salary be approved of by me; and likewise that he be licensed, as the canon, and the office of ordination direct he should be. And, after what has been determined in regard to giving titles, it cannot be deemed a hardship (upon a non-residing incumbent especially) to fix a deserving curate, of his own choice, with such an appointment out of his *abundance*, as may be a decent *supply* for the other's *wants*: though I have the satisfaction to find, among the answers to my inquiry on this article, instances  
of

of liberality, which, if generally practised, will supersede the necessity of any interposition on my part. And now, my reverend brethren, I commend you to the grace of God, and exhort you, not in my own words, but in those of the apostle, to *take heed unto yourselves and to your doctrine, holding fast the faithful word, as ye have been taught\**; for, by so doing, you will both *save yourselves, and them that bear you†.*

\* Tit. i. 9.

† 1 Tim. iv. 16.

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**C H A R G E**  
DELIVERED AT

**D A R T F O R D, &c.**  
ON THE  
**BISHOP's SECOND VISITATION,**

**J U L Y 10, &c. 1780.**

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MY REVEREND BRETHREN !

THE mutual satisfaction which I trust we shall receive from our present meeting, is what my duty and inclination led me to wish for at an earlier period.—The being obliged to defer it has been less your disappointment than mine: as you have lost nothing by the suspension of our friendly communication, that has not been amply supplied by the laudable attention and care of your respectable archdeacon: so that, even now, the most necessary and important part of my office consists in confirming the youth, and others, of your several parishes, and imploring the divine blessing on those, whom you have duly prepared and instructed for a devout admission to that sacred rite.

In regard to such other branches of the episcopal office, as have for their object the

superintending the doctrine, and manners, and general conduct of the parochial clergy, I can, with great comfort declare, that during the few years in which I have had the undeserved honour of standing in this relation to you, *my brethren*, not a single instance hath occurred that called for the exercise of any act of judicial authority; very few for frietidly expostulation, several for well-merited commendation—and, if I may judge from the many satisfactory returns (for all have not been made) to my inquiries into the present state of my diocese, there will, in future, be much more to applaud, than to complain of.

I would not, however, be understood to mean that every thing is so well ordered, either on your part or mine, as to stand in no need of our thus *assembling ourselves together*; if it were only for the purpose of *exhorting one another* to a more strict and conscientious discharge of our respective duties. For, how commendable soever it may be in any of us, to see that the public forms of religion are duly observed—to be punctual in attending the stated times and places of divine worship—to endeavour to excite the devotion of the congregation, by a solemn and affecting man-

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ner of offering up their united prayers and praises to the throne of grace—to explain, in suitable and pertinent discourses, the doctrines of christianity that are the objects of faith; and with a becoming zeal to enforce its reasonable precepts, which form the rule of practice—Yet, all these are but the ordinary and external parts of clerical duty—are all subject to public observation; and though they go far in deciding upon our public character, yet the testimony of a good conscience, the inward approbation of our own hearts, must be founded on other ground—on the care we take to cultivate a sense of sobriety, justice, and piety in our people in general, and particularly in those of our own household—to be regular in the practice of family devotion—to *visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction*—to *warn them that are unruly*—to *comfort the feeble-minded*—to *support the weak*, and to *be patient towards all men*—not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing.

In short, as the pastoral care consists of various parts and offices, which require, according to the solemn engagements we have all entered into, *that we give ourselves wholly*

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*to them*, and bend all our cares and studies that way; so, I hold it to be a principal use of such meetings as the present, that they naturally remind us of the great importance of our professional obligations, and even tacitly exhort us to a more strict observance of every duty that may render us acceptable to God, affectionate to one another, and instructive to those committed to our charge.

Another advantage resulting from these meetings, is the opportunity they afford us of considering how we are to conduct ourselves in consequence of any judicial determinations on doubtful points of law, or any acts of legislative authority that may seem to affect either our civil or religious interests, and have been enacted and published since the time of our former intercourse.

I then took occasion to mention two particular cases of ecclesiastical import, which, after much serious argument, had been recently determined.—One confirming the validity of promissory obligations in the titles given to stipendiary curates, and the other deciding the question upon canonical residence against

against any incumbent, not legally dispensed with, even though his benefice should afford *no place where to lay his head.*

Hard as these adjudications may seem to bear upon clergymen in certain situations, they have, notwithstanding, been productive of some good: the former has suggested a proper degree of care and caution in those who have occasion to give titles; and the latter is, in some measure, remedied by the humanity of the legislature: though by a mode of accommodation, less eligible perhaps to the present incumbent, than if the expence of providing it had been more equally divided between himself and his successors.

These I mention as subjects of personal consideration, that regard only the temporal interest of certain individuals of the clergy. But a subsequent statute, for "relieving his majesty's Roman Catholic subjects from some of the many penalties and disabilities imposed upon them," has been industriously represented as a measure of most pernicious tendency, as if it struck at the very foundation, and menaced the overthrow of the Protestant

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feligion in general. Yet, that the jealousies and apprehensions, conceived of this measure, were more pretended than real, is but too clear from the effects of them—effects which it is painful even to think of, much more to have beheld—what then must it have been to those who suffered from them! for surely such scenes of irreverent insult, tumultuous fury, and dreadful devastation, were never exhibited, to the same extent, in any other christian or civilized country—and it is well, if they leave not an indelible stain upon our own.

Where, then, can we find an adequate cause for these unparalleled outrages? not in a sincere and well meant zeal for religion; or for any particular *mode* of religion—in fanaticism and enthusiasm perhaps we may. Those contagious disorders of the mind that feel a malignant kind of ease from the infection and inflammation they spread around them—yet as a zeal for the Protestant religion, and apprehensions of the danger to which it is now exposed, have been the ostensible, whatever has been the latent, cause; we may ask what grounds there are for such apprehensions?

and

and whether any but the weak and credulous have been seduced into a belief, (which the needy, the profligate, and abandoned, were easily led to adopt) that every branch of the legislature, all the guardians of the national church, all its learned and orthodox ministers, have conspired to surrender up their faith, their conscience, their privileges, their emoluments, their nearest and dearest connections, to the idolatrous, persecuting, and domineering spirit of popery?—Surely to state such a question is to confute it.—But certain it is, that these, and such like groundless jealousies have been infused into the minds of the people: and therefore it will become a seasonable part of our duty, my brethren, to endeavour, both in our private and public discourses, to remove such injurious and ill-founded prejudices—to shew them the peculiar excellencies of our happy constitution in church and state—that we have not deserted our post in it, as shepherds and watchmen of our flocks, but are ever ready *to contend earnestly for the faith* as it was happily reformed from the gross pernicious errors of popery:—still, if it be an offence to our Protestant brethren of any denomination, that we have

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christian charity for Papists, which our divine Master taught us to have for our bitterest enemies, they may well pardon us this wrong.

For the little that regards myself, I am free to own, that, although I could not approve of all the powers and privileges granted by the act in question, I could not but admit the principles that gave rise to it in the other house of parliament; for they were christian and protestant principles—were founded in the rights of conscience which cannot be forced, nay, in liberality, humanity and charity: and, if sufficient time had been given, (which it must be owned the importance of the case required, and which was indulged to a part of the united kingdom) maturely to consider the several objects of it:—or, if the restraints removed, and the privileges granted, had been more precisely defined, and the whole guarded by a proviso, that nothing in the act contained should be construed to extend to repeal or invalidate any of the numerous penal laws still in being against Papists, there is reason to believe, it would neither have been so generally mistaken, nor so criminally opposed.

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Such a proviso was indeed subjoined to a bill, which, since the late unhappy disturbances, was framed to secure the protestant religion from any encroachments of popery, by more effectually restraining papists from teaching, or taking upon themselves the education or government of the children of protestants ; but, after some amendments made in a committee of the Lords, it was very unexpectedly rejected upon a division at the last reading ; partly as was urged lest the passing it so precipitately should be deemed the effect of intimidation, and also that it might receive a more full and deliberate discussion in the course of the ensuing session ; when the Bishops will not be prevented by their necessary avocations, as most of them were, both on the former and present occasion, from testifying their zeal for the safety of the protestant religion, which they have been most absurdly charged with an inclination to betray.

In the mean time his majesty, agreeably to an address of the house, upon a motion agreed to, has been graciously pleased to require the archbishops and bishops to issue  
circu-

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circular letters to the clergy of their respective dioceses, as was done thirteen years ago, to make diligent enquiry into the number of papists and popish schools in their several parishes throughout the kingdom; in order that the increase or diminution, being stated with all possible accuracy, and compared with the last return, a proper judgment may be formed thereupon. And I the rather anticipate the mention of this business to you, my brethren, that the populous parts of the diocese may be more leisurely investigated than could be expected in the short space of time since it was sent you as an article amongst my ordinary enquiries.

But whatever may be determined by the constitutional guardians of our religious and civil establishment, I trust and hope that no sober, rational, consistent protestant, will have any just cause to complain of the result of their deliberations. If upon experience and fair examination, the act complained of shall, instead of answering any salutary purpose, be really found to have been noxious in its operation; and to have prompted the papists to an insolent assumption of more privileges than were

were granted them, (which may possibly be the case;) no doubt but the legislative wisdom will hold it highly expedient either to repeal the act, or to guard against the abuses of it by the strongest bars of penal sanctions. As to the rest,

I need not, in this audience, enter into any discussion on the grounds of toleration, that distinguishing character of the protestant religion; which, ever since the happy æra of the revolution, has, with equal humanity and policy, dealt out its indulgence to persons of every sect and persuasion, in proportion to their peaceable and orderly submission to government. Hence to the Dissenters was first granted the public exercise of their mode of worship—to the Moravians a legal settlement of their church—and to the Quakers the acceptance of their affirmation instead of an oath. It was the same benevolent principle that lately extended some further indulgence to dissenting teachers and schoolmasters; and, if every concession of this kind was long withheld from the Roman Catholics, it was because their religious and civil principles were deemed hostile to the state; and their

power and numbers more formidable than at present. But if, in the contemplation of parliament, the removing certain restraints from men of all these descriptions were thought the most likely means of reconciling and conciliating their affections to the government they live under; and especially at a time when we have both our natural and unnatural enemies to contend with,—could any human wisdom foresee the unaccountable jealousies that so suddenly sprang from those measures, and the baneful fruits that have been grafted upon them?—But change now the actors in the late dreadful scene, and suppose, for a moment, that the clergy and people of the established church had associated in the same alarming numbers, had headed and forwarded the popular clamour, had reviled the conduct, and dictated the resolves of parliament; in what light would rational and sober-minded men have looked upon us at this day?—and if we are now to be reviled for not daring to beset and controul the legislative power,—if for not acting the part of wild incendiaries— for not insulting the persons and destroying the property of the magistrates, for not forcing open and demolishing the prisons—in short,

short, for not attempting to spread havock and desolation through the metropolis of the empire, and the seat of government—let us, my brethren, take these reproaches as part of the burthen we are to bear as ministers of the gospel of peace. But to ourselves, let it be our just praise, that we *bless and curse not*, and that when we are *reviled*, we *revile not again*: always accounting it our duty to watch over the conduct of the people committed to our charge, and to impress upon their minds that important truth, so lately recommended from the throne, that *rebellious insurrections to resist, or reform the laws, must end either in the destruction of the persons who make the attempt, or in the subversion of our free and happy constitution.*

SU

**ORATIUNCULA,**

**QUAM CORAM**

**SUPERIORE DOMO CONVOCATIONIS,**

**INFERIORIS DOMUS PROLOCUTOR;**

**J. THOMAS,**

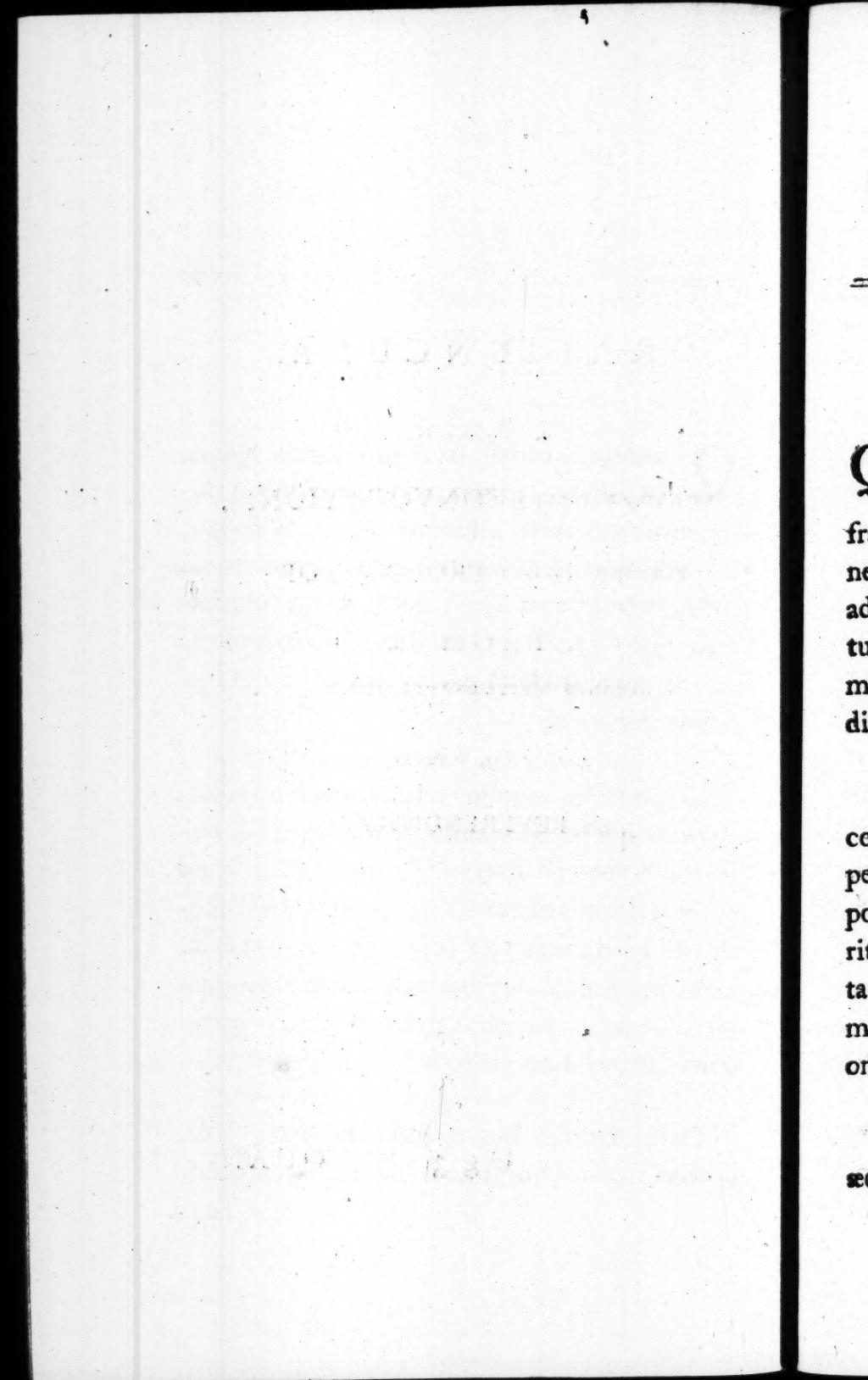
**DECANUS WESTMONASTERIENSIS,**

**A. D. 1769, HABUIT,**

**JUSSU REVERENDISSIMI.**

**G g 3**

**QUAN-**



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**Q**uanquam in hâc sacrâ provinciali synodo coram te, præses reverendissime, confratrum meorum inferioris domi suffragiis, nec non doctissimi hujus viri laude honestatus adsto, veruntamen, ad novum atque inusitatum hoc dicendi genus, licet proprios intra muros, non modestè modò, sed et timidè, ac diffidenter accedo.

Et profectò, quotiescumque mecum tacitus cogitavi quale, quantumque munus mihi nuperrimè demandatum est, mirari satis haud potui, mirabuntur et alii permulti, undè fuerit ista in me tam propensa voluntas, quæ, de tanto præpollentium virorum cætu, meos humeros, certè parùm validos, ad tam grave onus sustinendum elegerit !

Datur forsitan honos huic dignitati, loca,  
sedibus meis, hujusmodi muneri exequendo

G g 4 ~ haud

haud incommodè sitis:—quibus nec ineptè daretur, si modò præsens illis contigisset par nupero earum domino: egregio nempè ac per quām venerabili patri! (namque mihi semper erit ille pater:) qui, pueritiâ suâ, in hoc celeberrimo literarum gymnasio, laudatissimè actâ, post multos atque amplos honores quos proiectâ ætate meruit, nunc demùm satis unico beatus magnosque cedendo, potius quām ampliores ambiendo, nihil aliud pensi habet, nisi ut factis elucidandis literis vacet; atque eò magis diuinum aliquod cogitet quò proprius ad sapientiam cœlitus perfectam accedet,

Mihi autem, hîc, in utrasque partes ejus subeunti, quām dispares sunt vires! quām venuis facultas! fateor enim, quod et ipsa fatetur oratio, me neque eâ quā par est doctrinâ munitum; nec dicendi copiâ præditum, nec usu promptum, nec animo satis erectum: verum enim yero naturali quodam, et sæpè indecoro pudore impeditum, turbatumque.

Verba quidem, quæ jam jam ornatissimus frater, mei præsentandi causâ, habuit, erectiori animo præsentatum fecerint: ni in iisdem tantum inesset yenuistatis, facundiæ tantum, ut

ut multus vereor ne oratiunculam meam insultam, inconcinnam, futilem; imo et vestris benè purgatis auribus omnino indignam, arguant. Quām vellem igitur, huic, qui nulli non officio par est, meas quoque partes sustinere datum esset; ut quem disertissimum puper audivistis concionatorem, eundem et promptissimum plausissetis referendarium.

Sed mea res nunc agitur: et, quūm jacta sit alea, sortem meam et æquo, et grato animo feram oportet: quippe parūm decet evocatum militem referre pedem; multò minūs electum et conscriptum; minimè verò suis sub auspiciis, reverendissime, militaturum. Tibi igitur, ac venerandis admodūm co-episcopis, penes quos est electionem hanc ratam facere, lubens, volens, me committo: quòd si cuncta, quæ muneris hujuscce ratio postulet, minūs ex optato præstaverim, ea tamen à me placide et benignè accipietis, quæ debitâ revertentiâ, quæ gratissimo obsequio, quæ summâ fide ac diligentia præstari possint.

Neque hæc meo solummodo, sed et specatissimorum fratrum nomine paternitati tuæ spondeo: quorum ore et lingua mihi datur  
huc

huc usque proloqui, si non detur ultrà. Nullus enim dubito, quin, unicuique, hanc sacram synodus ineunti, eadem sit mens, voluntas eadem, in omnibus quæ ad ecclesiæ disciplinam, ad fidei puritatem, ad morum reformationem, ad universam denique reipublicæ christianæ pacem et concordiam spectant; quam in vobis, amplissimi patres, probatissimam videre est quosque idcirco, decus nostrum et præsidium, uno ore prædicamus.

Quantum verò decus \* ! quantum eheu ! præsidium, columenque rerum nostrarum, collapsum, amissum, avulsum, paucis abhinc mensibus, ploravimus ! — Nobis scilicet avulsum, et bonorum omnium luctibus suspiriisque comitatum ! in sempiternas verò sedes, cœtumque justorum summo fibi gaudio et honore translatum. Ibi tandem à laboribus requiescit, atque opera sua, ne quidem hic peritura, sequuntur illum : quippe qui mortuus licet etiam nunc loquitur : mox majora, cum de synodis, tūm de communī salute, locuturus.

\* Archiepiscopus Cant. Thomas Secker, LL.D. qui obiit aëst. 2º ætat. sue 75º.

Proh !

Proh ! incredibilem industriam, et omni-  
genæ literaturæ supellectilem ! — quibus ac-  
cessit indoles adeò vegeta, mentisque vires,  
usque ad extremum exactæ vitæ curriculum,  
adeò infractæ ; adeò ad universa provinciæ suæ  
munera obeunda aptæ et accommodatæ, ut  
difficile dictu sit, an viri virtutes magis or-  
nârint præsulem, an præsulis virum ? singu-  
las enim ad divini Magistri exemplar, uti nos  
omnes decet, compositas habuit ; singulas pe-  
rinde non ut sibi gloriam, sed ut aliis com-  
modum compararet.

Tali tantoque viro, cuius famam meritis  
quæsitam, nec auget adulatio, nec minuit in-  
vidia, non quasi parentare, hoc præsertim in  
confessu, nefas duxerim ! Imò nobis, fratres,  
jure quodam synodali parentandum est.—  
Quod et vos, venerandi patres, plùs quàm ta-  
cità pietate fecistis.—Vobis etenim, et om-  
nibus ecclesiæ non malevolis, ille flebilis oc-  
cidit ! Nulli tamen flebilior, nulli carior,  
quàm sibi carissimo, deque me optimè me-  
rito, præclaro alterius provinciæ præfidi : viro  
sanè cui, proximum illi dignitatis gradum  
occupanti, amicitia dedit parem, dedit enim,  
alterâ semper alterius suavissimâ consuetudine  
frui.

frui.—Tandem verò cedant luctus nostri, cedant suspiria, modusque desiderio sit, quùm te, reverendissime, tam assiduo cultu patris-fantem cernimus, ut magnas antecessoris virtutes generosæ tuæ stirpi inferendo—*nec longum tempus*, uti cecinit poeta, *et ingens,*

Exeat ad cœlum ramis felicibus arbos \*.

At quidam fortasse homines, nimis altè sapientes, foràs dicant.—“ Non vestrūm est in “ synodo magna loqui, sed agere. Proinde “ agendo spectemini—subdolos Romæ vul- “ pes ab ovilibus depellite : Larvata fanati- “ corum ora detegite ; simoniacam labem à “ sacris abstergite—gravamina cuncta, nec “ non offendicula cuncta, è medio tollite, “ sublevate, reformatæ.”

Perdura profecto mādata, patres, et satis pro imperio ! quæ tamen, si rectè augurer, minùs sunt inscitiae, quām irrequieti animi, ac ingenii, aliquid novi molientis, indicia. Ecquis enim prudens et æquus rerum aestimator idem censet ? Ecquis in ecclesiæ regnique annalibus quantulum cunque versatus, qui non planè videt synodos provinciales, quas hodierna rerum ratio postulat, minimè tantam sibi arrogare potentiam ; minimè velle, neque

\* Virg. G. lib. ii. 80.

neque posse, eâ superbire dominatione quâ, prioribus quibusdam sæculis, superbiebant? — Magna nimis est hâc in re, felicitas temporum! — Non, ut olim, intolerantem habemus ecclesiam! Non de imperio cum regibus certantem! Non papali nutui obtemperantem! Non petri gladio minitantem, nec, mentitis itidèm clavibüs, fidelissimos quoisque Dei cultores, cœlis excludentem! — Sed libertate verè christianâ fundatam; sed amplissimis legibus stabilitam: — sed moderata disciplinâ gubernatam: — sed et doctrinâ sanam, et fide puram, et cultu simpli- cem, et caritate plenam: quinetiam ritibus nostris alienos ac dissentientes, fraterno amore complectentem, atque suum cuique morem cultûs æquissimis conditionibus concedentem.

Quæ cùm ita se res habeat, annon multa necesse est, tam sacra, quâm civilia, aliorsùm a synodis agitentur? et, secundùm leges nunc latas, proprio coram judice avocentur? — Esto, quod nonnulla minus commoda, at per pauca sanè, quæ, pro tunc temporis ratione, usu, ingenio in reformatæ religionis normâ manebant, et usque ad huc manent. — Idionè bonorum hominum est officium ad populum provocare? incerta pro certis habere? mentibusque

busque infirmis scrupulum injicere?—An prudenterum est res quietas movere? tutas in discrimen ducere, susque deque omnia vertere, scilicet ut paucorum ad arbitrium, et more quodam novo, insolito, inexperto, mutentur, corrigantur, disponantur!

Videant autem fastidiosi isti quanti sint oppugnatores leges de toleratione, deque uniformitate scriptas; consulant alterius articulum de binis Britanniæ regnis auspicatissimo numine consociatis: quo utriusque ecclesiæ doctrina, cultus, regimen, disciplina, in perpetuum declarantur immutabiles.—Præstent denique supremo harum ecclesiarum capiti, debitam fidem, debitam obedientiam: Isti, inquam, præstent, qui non jure magis ac titulo, quam pietate, quam virtute, quam morum sanctitate atque exemplo, est supremus.

His bene perpensis, in præsens omissis aliis, verecundius paullò se gerere discant; sumaque de rebus tanti momenti sententiam, si non vobis, patres, iis saltèm cedere, quibuscum est summa rerum potentia; quorumque ex sapientiâ aptissima quæque, commodissimo tempore, pro certò expectanda sunt.

Nos

Nos inferèa magnas, nimò quas possimus maximas; optimo principi habemus gratias; qui, prout singulis regni ordinibus singula sua jura, privilegia, moresque laudabiles salvos esse velit; ita, pro spectatâ suâ in nostrum benevolentia, tibi, reverendissime præses, hanc convocandi synodus concessit facultatem, ut præstò effemus, iis de rebus tractandis ac deliberandis, annuente scilicet rege, quæ paci et concordiæ bñè vertant, nobisque et omnibus sint saluti.

Restat modò ut unusquisque nostrum ordine suo, et proprio intentus negotio sedulò, ac pro virili, connitatur, nè facrosancta religio æternâ veritate fundata, ab humanis erroribus vindicata, legibusque iterum atque iterum sancita; vel insidiosis hostium pelliciis corrumpatur, vel intempestivis nostris dissensionibus labefactetur, vel, quod magis timendum est, pravissimis moribus evertatur. Absint verò, longè a nobis absint, quæcunque sunt temporum vitia, neque minimâ ex parte sint nostrum! Absint patroni venales, emptiones impuræ, fides dubia, indocta, fanaticæ, superstitionis! — Absint proterva partium contentio, insanæ discordiæ, delirantes tumultus,

fas et nefas juxta cestimantes! absint denique Superbia, luxus, socordia, inertes horæ, cupiditates pravæ, alieni appetentia, sui profusio. — Sed quum vita nostra aliter instituta sit, sanctæque partes nostræ aliam vivendi rationem et alios mores postulent, idcirco summæ sit nobis curæ ut de vivo, et sempiterno Evangelii fonte, purissimos hauriamus! Inde, non nostras modò, sed, quantum in nobis est, aliorum mentes à mundanis sordibus depurgandi copia! Inde salus in humanum genus derivata fluit! Inde etiam ineffabilis ista Dei, christique redemptoris gratia, quæ peccantibus veniam, quæ infirmis auxilium, quæque omnibus certam et indubiam spem beatæ resurrectionis largitur.

De cæteris igitur, (et, quò fidem hanc intemeratam conservemus, non pluribus opus est,) “ Quæcunque fratres sunt vera, quæcunque veneranda, quæcunque justa, quæcunque pura, quæcunque amabilia, quæcunque bonæ famæ; si qua sit virtus, et si qua laus, hæc cogitemus, hæc agamus, et Deus pacis erit nobiscum.”

A

## S E R M O N

ON THE DEATH OF THE RIGHT REVEREND

J O H N,

LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER;

PREACHED IN THE

PARISH CHURCH OF WOOLWICH,

ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1793.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL WATSON, A. M.  
MASTER OF THE ACADEMY AT SHOOTER'S-HILL.

VOL. II.

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W E B B

REVIEW OF THE MARCH 1948 BILL TO  
AMEND THE VOTING REGISTRATION ACT

K H O L

Chairman of the House

Committee on Education

REVIEW OF THE MARCH 1948 BILL

AMENDMENT TO THE VOTING REGISTRATION ACT

REVIEW OF THE MARCH 1948 BILL  
AMENDMENT TO THE VOTING REGISTRATION ACT

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## SERMON, &c.

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NUMBERS XXIII. 16.

*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let  
my last end be like his !*

THAT it is appointed to men once to die \*,  
might possibly have been inferred, even  
without the voice of scripture, from the con-  
stant instances of mortality that every spot of  
earth exhibits. But what death is in its con-  
sequences—why some are found who *have a*  
*desire to depart*, while most shrink from the  
prospect of eternity and tremble on its brink  
—what makes the death of the righteous en-

\* Heb. ix. 27.

viable, demands a different sort of evidence. However it is agreed on all hands, that such a preference does exist, and all agree in hoping for the same mode of dying.

On this ground therefore I take up the sentence now read to you, without discussing virtually the various modes of rendering the terms, or the precise sense in which the apostate prophet uttered them.

The sentiment is interesting in a high degree, as it contains the secret wish of all; and it is not the less pointed, for having dropt from the mouth of one who, though desirous enough to die the death of the righteous, seems to have taken little pains to live his life.

On another account also your attention to the words will be engaged on this occasion, because they will remind you of the exemplary life and peaceful death of our late venerable Bishop, and because they are proposed, for the subject of this day's meditations, by a near relative of the deceased, much esteemed among us.

If

If our existence were to terminate with life, there would be no such mighty difference between the death of one man and another; nay, the advantage would be on the other side—the wicked would carry the recollection of his pleasures with him to the grave, and think of nothing further—while the righteous would there, for the first time, find that he had *cleaned his heart in vain* \*; that he had foregone the pleasures of the world while in his power, and only learnt their value with their loss.

The text furnishes a far different argument; and, while it attributes a preference to the good man's death, supposes necessarily that there is another sort of dying; thus forming a conclusion as it were from the scripture, that *the wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death* †.

Let it be our present business therefore, to inquire into the causes that contribute to render the death of the righteous so desirable,

\* Ps. lxxiii. 13.

† Prov. xiv. 32.

and the means by which to make our last end resemble his.

To the first point I answer, the death of the righteous is a death of comfort—a death of confidence—a death of glory.

The death of the righteous is desirable, because it is a death of comfort.

At that moment, when the soul is hastening to her place, doubtless we shall have need of every comfort, and it will be idle to look for these in the tender affiduities of friends, or the soothings of sympathizing relatives, any more than in the temporary relief of medicine. If they are not found in our bosoms, they shall in vain be sought for from without.

Now the comforts of a dying hour consist in a humble assurance of the pardon of sin, the consciousness of having lived in the true faith of Christ, the satisfaction of having diligently served God in our generation, and the near view of heaven.

Of

Of these consolations it may well be said, that they are neither few nor small. Nor will any doubt but they belong exclusively to the death-bed of the righteous, or that it is from the united force of them that the dying Christian derives his confidence.

What made Job resolve to *wait all the dayt of his appointed time\**, but the reflection that he knew that his *Redeemer liveth +*? What made St. Paul think it gain to die *t*, but that he knew whom he had believed? What made him say with such calm pleasure, that *the time of his departure was at hand §*, (and that even prematurely) but the consciousness that he had fought the good fight ||, he had finished his course, he had kept the faith? — What made Peter so ready to *put off this tabernacle ¶*, but the certainty that, in embracing the faith that he had obtained, he had not followed cunningly devised fables \*\*? — And what gives any christian the confidence to brave this harnessed enemy, but the triumphant assu-

\* Job xiv. 14.    + Ibid. xix. 25.    † 2 Tim. i. 12.

§ 2 Tim. iv. 6.    ¶ Ibid. iv. 7.    ‡ Pet. i. 14.

\*\* Ibid. i. 16.

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rance, that we are more than conquerors through  
him that loved us\*.

With such comforts and such confidence  
does the righteous meet his death.—He con-  
siders it as the period of his fears, the close  
of his temptations—the consummation of his  
hopes.

— The last fury blast of time  
That wrecks indeed his tempest-shatter'd bark,  
But casts him safe ashore.— He has trodden  
resolutely the thorny steep of  
virtue, keeping in view the end of his faith,  
the salvation of his soul †; and the higher he  
mounts in the bright ascent of holiness, the  
wider does his horizon open, till he gains the  
top of Pisgah, and grasps the whole heavenly  
Canaan within his ken: Then it is that he  
sinks into his balmy grave, like the great  
Patriarch at his Maker's call, having his  
whole heart full of the rapturous prospect:  
“ While thought unveils to his fixt eye  
A scene of deep eternity;  
'Till, life dissolving at the view,  
He wakes, and finds the vision true.”

\* Rom. viii. 37.      † 1 Peter i. 9.

Here

Here then begins the *glory* which we said distinguishes the death of the righteous.—His life has been a life of faith in the Son of God, but his holiness is not perfect till he comes to die; it is then only that he experiences in the highest degree, *Christ in him the hope of glory*\*. He has wrestled with weakness and temptation, and has been able to withstand in many an evil day †; but it is the last struggle that completes the conquest, and carries him at once beyond the reach of sin. *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out* ‡. It is death that puts an end to the probation of the righteous, and admits him in a moment, to that temple of God not made with hands, from whence he shall no more go out, to the heavenly Jerusalem §, to the general assembly of the church of the first-born, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.—Surely these, and similar declarations of scripture, which assert plainly that the righteous, immediately as they are absent from the body, are present with the Lord ||, should leave no

\* Coloss. i. 27. † Ephes. vi. 13. ‡ Rev. iii. 12.

§ Heb. xii. 22. || 2 Cor. v. 8.

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room for the idea of such a middle state, as a popish purgatory, and St. Paul's *desire to depart* \*, when he was sensible that his continuance in the church was so beneficial to it, was founded on the assurance of his own immediate gain; that he should be *with Christ*. For, by revelation, he knew that the souls of the righteous are immediately brought by death into the innumerable company of heaven, and *so shall they ever be with the Lord* †.

These are the principal traits by which the death of the righteous is distinguished, and, I trust, I shall not be suspected of adulation, if I apply them to the character of our deceased diocesan. I would not speak of him with flattery—but I must speak of him with feeling—and if, to unite the qualities of the tender relative, the instructive companion, the benevolent philanthropist, and the faithful friend, be to form the useful man, these characters were eminently his. If, to follow up the true faith of the gospel with that exemplary conversation which *adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour* ‡, to preach Christ with fervour, and yet with charity, and to rule

\* Phil. i. 23.      † 1 Thess. iv. 17.      ‡ Tit. ii. 10.

with

with all authority; and yet with moderation, be the duty of a christian pastor, this did he. And, if to combine the virtues of the moral state with the graces of the gospel, complete the life of the righteous, and give any title to the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give—verily he hath not lost his reward\*.

Is such the blessedness of them that die in the Lord†? Is this the glory that shall follow ‡? What manner of persons then ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness §? How early should we be in the preparation for our last end, since an eternity depends upon it? It will avail us little to resolve to do this at some future period.—Alas! we know not what a day may bring forth ||, and the question is not what we intend to be, but what we are!—Here seems to have been Balac's delusion, and this is one of the inventions men have sought out for their own destruction, to substitute for the practice of holiness, the resolution of a dear-bred repentence, on a sloping and slippery bank.

\* 2 Tim. iv. 8.    † Rev. xvi. 13.    ‡ 1 Pet. i. 11.  
§ 2 Pet. iii. 11.    || Prov. xxvii. 1.

Truly

Truly eternal happiness is of little value, if to have lived a life of opposition to its principles can be compromised, by devoting one day, and that the last and worst of all, to the preparation for it!—But let the intended penitent first be sure, that a future time shall be allotted him, and that there is no danger *his soul should be this night required of him\**; perhaps there is not, but will probability here serve his turn?

However, give the dying penitent all he asks, lay him on his bed of lingering sickness; not such as to deprive him of the power of reflection, but just so sore that he may be satisfied it is unto death. See him collect his thoughts and summon up his fortitude.

He begins with calling to mind his faults and follies, and lamenting vehemently over them; but he feels a partiality to them still, of which he cannot at once divest himself, for he knows that even in health and vigour, he was not brought in a moment to change his opinions, and reverse his purposes; he finde

\* Luke xiii. 20.

that

that habit in the mind is at least as strong as in the body.

But he fervently prays God to pardon all ; and pleads the blood of him who is *able to save to the uttermost*\* ; forgetting all the while that its efficacy extends to those only that come unto God by him, while he himself has been designing finally to come to God *without him*.

He goes on now and resolves seriously to forsake sin, and live to God—but mark ! his purpose to live well is founded only on the probability that he shall live no longer : such resolutions must appear equivocal, and though sincere, can, as the case is stated, be of no avail. Then alone can we make resolutions that are truly good, when the judgment is sound, the passions quiet, and a space for the performance of them is in prospect.

But, allowing the death-bed penitent all the benefit of sorrow for sin, prayer for forgiveness, and resolution of amendment ; do these amount to the conditions of salvation ? Where is that active virtue which the very

\* Heb. vii. 25.

nature of a probationary state requires, and which the word of God demands; and if we are not to enter into the kingdom of heaven, without doing the will of our Father which is in heaven \* ; whence can we hope that he will compound a life of goodness with the resolutions of a dying day? Heaven forbid that we should seem to limit the unbounded mercy of our God. Repentance, however late, we trust shall be accepted; but is this sufficient ground for us to delay repentance, till we are sure what later time shall be allotted us? The labourer in the parable, who had wrought but one hour †, received as much, it is true, as they that had borne the burden and heat of the day ‡; but then he came into the vineyard at the first summons. And the malefactor on the cross perhaps had never heard of Jesus till he found him in the same condemnation with himself.

Beware then of lulling thyself into a hope, that all will be well at last. To have begun well, is the only assurance we can have of ending so; and doubtless, to the best of men the business of a dying day will have no leis-

\* Matt. vii. 21. † Ibid. xx. 12. ‡ Luke xxiii. 44.

sure. To possess their souls in patience\*, to wean themselves from the world—to reply with calmness to the solicitude of weeping friends, and to collect their courage for the final conflict, will be enough for all their manhood.—How then canst thou hope, in addition to these things, when thy faculties are enfeebled, and thy body racked with pain, to be able to do all that for which thy life has been too short?—This thy grand enemy is well aware of; and, if he can but prevail on thee to put off the care of working out thy salvation to thy death-bed, he will find other business for thee there—he will even to thy confusion insultingly suggest, that what he told thee all thy life-time it was too soon to think of, it will be now—too late!

Escape from such delusion! Avoid the tempting snare! Rouse yourselves from the fatal dream!

“ Awake! arise! or be for ever fallen! †”

Live the life of the righteous, if ye would die his death. Take off your affections from things on earth, and fix them upon things above. Strive to be among the number of those to whom the word of Christ shall be

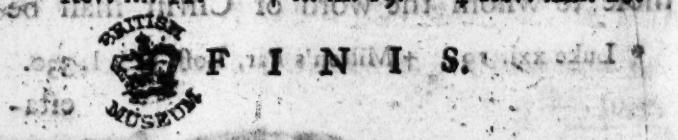
\* Luke xxi. 19. † Milton's Par. Lost, b. i. l. 330.

established. To him that overcometh will I give to sit down with me on my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne\*. Let your eager hopes importune heaven with prayers. Lord, when shall these things be? When shall we join with them that have already obtained the promises in the song of Moses and the Lamb? ~~boldesins~~  
~~and our v. it doinw not andt his ch or bids ad~~  
~~ai When shall we see the day of our complete~~  
~~salvation drawing nigh? When shall the dark-~~  
~~ness of this nether world be done away, and~~  
~~the glorious dawn arise, from which the pro-~~  
~~mise shall be realized? The sun shall be no~~  
~~more thy light by day, neither for brightness~~  
~~shall the moon give her light unto thee; but the~~  
~~Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light,~~  
~~and thy God thy glory †.~~

With these sensations and these hopes, may we patiently abide the day of our Redeemer's coming; and while his tender warning vibrates in our ear, *Lo, I come quickly* ‡, let our hearts return the rapturous answer, *Even so come Lord Jesus!*

\* Rev. iii. 21.

† If. lx. 19. ‡ Rev. xxii. 20.



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